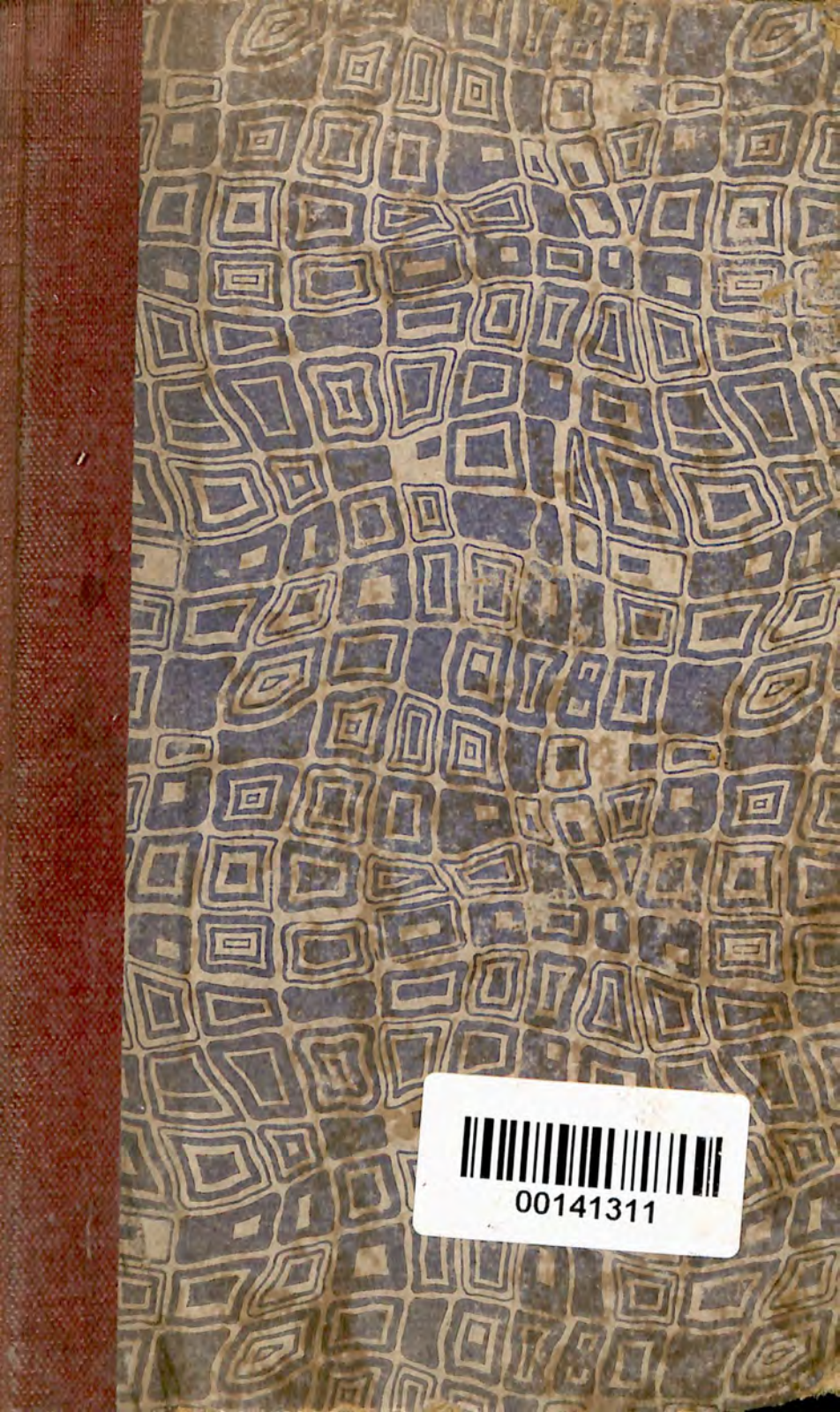

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LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY,

FROM THE YEAR 1769 TO 1797.

BY HORACE WALPOLE,

LORD ORFORD.

NOW FIRST PRINTED FROM ORIGINAL MSS.

EDITED, WITH NOTES, BY

THE RT. HON. R. VERNON SMITH, M.P.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

HORACE WALPOLE has so long been a favourite in the literary world, that I need hardly offer any explanation to the Public for the publication of the present Series of Letters. They comprise perhaps as complete and continuous a correspondence with one individual as any that has appeared. As they are written to a lady, they illustrate the tone of society of that day; for while they preserve a formality of address which no one would now use after so long an acquaintance, they contain allusions and anecdotes scarcely permissible to the more refined taste of our own times.

Lady Ossory was said by those who knew her best, to have been "gifted with high endowments of mind and person, high-spirited, and noble in her ways of thinking, and generous in her disposition." "She was a beautiful woman, her mental faculties superior; she possessed a lively imagination, quick discernment, ready wit, great vivacity both in conversation and writing. In her last illness, which was long and painful, she evinced the greatest fortitude, strength of mind, tenderness, resignation, and patience."

It does not appear that Lord Orford preserved any of her letters: indeed, his correspondents generally appear to have entertained greater regard for his

abilities than he did for theirs. From the specimens I have seen of Lady Ossory's letters they were easy and negligent, but perhaps intentionally calculated rather to elicit answers than to convey much information, or express any vigorous opinions themselves.

The few notes which I have added relate only to such circumstances as my relationship enabled me to explain of family history. I have purposely abstained from the repetition of accounts of persons which have been given in former editions of Walpole's letters, which are derived from registers and magazines, open to the observation of all who think it worth while to pursue such inquiries.

I present the Work to the public for their amusement: if they derive any from it, the obligation is to the writer, of whose thoughts I am only the vehicle of communication. If they adopt my impression of these Letters, it is that they place Lord Orford in a more amiable attitude, as to feelings and friendships, than he has hitherto stood. At any rate, having been urged by persons of whose judgment I hold a high opinion, to publish them, it seems to me not right to withhold them; and I am not aware that there is any one now alive who can be offended by one word in them.

R. V. S.

Farming-Woods,
April 26, 1848.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In consequence of the circumstance of the Letters of Horace Walpole to his various Correspondents having been published at different periods, some uncertainty has been produced in the minds of those who desire to possess a Complete Collection of them. To remove this, the Publisher begs to subjoin a brief statement of the Dates of the Publications of the various Series.

In 1798, Miss Berry edited the "Works of the Earl of Orford," in 5 vols. 4to. This publication contained, in addition to the Miscellaneous Works of the noble Author, his Letters to Richard West, Esq.; to the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway; to Richard Bentley, Esq.; to the poet Gray; to John Chute, Esq.; to the Earl of Strafford; to the Countess Dowager of Ailesbury; and to Miss Hannah More.

In 1818, Horace Walpole's Letters to George Montagu, Esq., and to the Rev. C. Cole, 4to., were published by Messrs. Rodwell and Martin. The same series, with additions, were published by Messrs. Rodwell and Martin, and Mr. Colburn, in 1836, in 4 vols. 8vo.

In 1825, Horace Walpole's Letters to the Earl of Hertford, in 4to., were published by Mr. Knight.

In 1833, Mr. Bentley published the First Series of Horace Walpole's Letters to Sir Horace Mann, edited by the late Lord Dover, in 3 vols. 8vo.

In 1840, Mr. Bentley published the Collective Edition of the Letters of Horace Walpole. This well-annotated Edition comprised all the Letters which had been published to that date,

namely, those published in 1798; those to George Montagu, and Rev. C. Cole; those to the Earl of Hertford, and the First Series of the Letters to Sir Horace Mann, to the death of George the Second, and a Series of Letters, then first published, to Miss Mary Berry.*

The remaining Letters to Sir Horace Mann, (permission to publish which had been previously withheld by the late Lord Holland,) were published by Mr. Bentley in 1843; all the remaining Works in manuscript having been purchased by him of the present Duke of Grafton, as executor of the late Lord Waldegrave.

The Public may now, therefore, obtain a complete Collection of the Epistolary Works of Horace Walpole, by obtaining

1st. The Collective Edition of Horace Walpole, published in 6 vols. 8vo. in 1840.

2nd. The Second Series of Horace Walpole's Letters to Sir Horace Mann, in 4 vols. 8vo. 1843; and

3rdly. The present publication of Letters to the Countess of Ossory, edited by the Right Hon. R. Vernon Smith, M.P., in 2 vols. 8vo.: the entire Collection forming 12 vols. 8vo.

* Most kindly presented to the Publisher by Miss Berry.

New Burlington Street,
April, 1848.

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LETTERS

TO

THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY

BY

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

LETTER I.

Arlington Street, Oct. 26, 1769.

WHO would have thought, madam, that your ladyship would thank me for having a tolerable memory! Is there any merit in remembering for a twelvemonth that the most agreeable woman in the world was always partial and good to me? Is it extraordinary that I should wish for her coming to town that I may again have the honour of seeing her often, which I hope she will allow? I am certainly the most meritorious person in the world, if these things are merits. Nay, I will believe so: good Christians expect infinite rewards for the smallest portion of desert that they can screw together, and sift from all the chaff of their whole lives; and therefore, madam, *when two or three are gathered together in thy name*, and talk of thee, I

am not only rejoiced that you acknowledge it, but trust that you will reward them in the fulness of time, by letting them see a great deal of you this winter. You cannot imagine how pleased I shall be, to be witness to your happiness, which undoubtedly does not surprise me. I have for some time known the goodness and good sense of Lord Ossory, and your ladyship must be very partial to him indeed, before I shall think your affection ill-placed.*

I am much obliged to your ladyship for the two epistles of Voltaire, though I had seen them before. I own I think that to Boileau one of the best things he ever wrote. Better judges like the *last* best; I am sorry to say they have not convinced me. There are three separate lines in the two epistles that strike me as perfection itself. The first is on Cardinal Fleury—

Et qui n'affecta rien que le pouvoir suprême.

The second is the end of the same epistle,

S'ils ont les prejugés, j'en guerirai les ombres.

The third is in the "Trois Imposteurs,"

Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer.

The two last are inimitably bold and sublime. The first includes more wit and reflection than one almost ever saw couched in so small a compass. At the same time, while one admires such talents, can one help feeling a little contempt for the author? Is it not

* The Earl of Upper Ossory was married to the Hon. Miss Liddell, late Duchess of Grafton, daughter of Lord Ravensworth, March 8, 1769.—Ed.

creating himself the pope of impiety to excommunicate the author of "Les Trois Imposteurs," as if none but the head of any Church ought to dare to be an unbeliever. His low jealousy, too, against Boileau, whose ghost he is always ripping and pinching when he can, with his own almost ghostly fingers, is unworthy of a man who does not want such little arts to secure fame.

When I have been mentioning such great names, how shall I have the confidence, madam, to shift the subject to myself? I will hurry over it as fast as I can. When I have the honour of seeing you, you will give me your commands, and they shall be obeyed.

I am lingering in town with Lord Hertford and Mr. Conway, the latter of whom stays to see the event of poor Mrs. Harris's illness. They have despaired of her for some days: yesterday she took James' powder, and as it had effect, there were faint hopes last night. I have just heard her night was bad, but as the medicine has been repeated I do not yet totally despair, having such confidence in those powders that I almost believe they would cure anything but the villany of physicians. It reconciles me to the gout that it has no occasion for them. There is a little dignity, too, in it that consoles me; an insignificant man that grows old, wants something to give him a little importance; and with my meagre figure, what with its being a little respectable, and what with its being a little comical, I find the gout does not at all succeed ill with me. People pity me at a distance, and smile when they see

me, and as I am not apt to be out of humour, altogether I am very well contented. This last attack passed off in ten days, and I hope your ladyship's pity did not last longer. Not being Lord Privy Seal, forgive me, madam, if I am only your ladyship's, &c.

LETTER II.

Arlington Street, Dec. 5, 1769.

I HAD too great regard to your ladyship's amusement to send you, though you ordered me, such old trash as my writings, which are too trifling and careless to deserve a second reading. When you come to town, which I trust will be sooner than you announce, I will look out for any of your ladyship wants, if you still should believe you want any; but it is impossible in cold blood to make up a pacquet of one's own rubbish, and send it deliberately into the country. If there was anything new, but what never is new, political pamphlets, I would send it. Voltaire's pieces I return with thanks, and beg pardon for having forgotten them. George Selwyn is, I think, the only person remaining who can strike wit out of the present politics. On hearing Calcraft wanted to be Earl of Ormond, he said, it would be very proper, as no doubt there had been many *Butlers* in his family.

Crawford is actually gone to Paris, only I suppose that he may not be back in time for the meeting of the Parliament, unless Lord Holland drives him home.

Mrs. George Grenville is supposed to be dead by this time, as the express of yesterday said she was given over. Dr. Duncan went down, but with no hopes. Lady Betty Germain is very near it too, and I suppose the hopes and fears of her legatees are on tiptoe.

There is a new comedy at Covent Garden, called "The Brothers," that has great success, though I am told it is chiefly owing to the actors; an obligation I should not have thought any play would have had to the present actors at either house. From the operas I am almost beaten out. As if either the Guadagni or the Zamparini had a voice, there are two parties arisen who alternately encore both in every song, and the operas last to almost midnight. What a charm there must be in contradiction, when it can prevent one's being tired of what one is tired to death.

Monsieur de Chatelet is expected this evening with the olive branch in his mouth. Madame does not come yet, which I am very sorry for, being so unpopular as to like her extremely,—but I choose to be unpopular, lest I should be chosen alderman for some ward or other, and there is one just now vacant. I hope they will elect Mrs. Macaulay. I believe I have told your ladyship all the news except politics, and those I endeavour to know as little of as I can, having nothing to do any longer with either dissolution or resurrection; nor a grain of virtue that I intend to carry to market, and which I think is the only commodity that sells as dear at second hand as it did when it was first exposed for sale. I think of patriots

and statesmen alike, and pretty much as Voltaire does of authors in the two last lines of the enclosed—

> Entre les beaux esprits on verra l'union,
> Mais qui pourra jamais souper avec Freron.

I hope I need say nothing to convince Lord Ossory of my regard. If I do, your ladyship, I am sure, can best add anything that is wanting to make it agreeable to him, to increase that regard, he must bring your ladyship soon to London.

LETTER III.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 4, 1770.

Your ladyship's very obliging letter would at any other time have been a cruel disappointment to me; but I am so unfit to receive good company, that, in charity to your ladyship and Lord Ossory, I believe I should once more, mortifying as it would have been to me, have begged you to avoid me. Had you come hither, madam, at your return from Winterslow, you would have found me about as much at ease as St. Lawrence was upon his gridiron, and, though I have been in no danger, as he was, I think I may say I have been *saved, but so as by fire;* for I do not believe roasting is much worse than what I have suffered—one can be broiled, too, but once; but I have gone through the whole fit twice, it returning the moment I thought myself cured. I am still dandled in the arms of two servants, and not yet arrived at my go-cart.

In short, I am fit for nothing but to be carried into the House of Lords to prophesy.

I beg your ladyship's pardon for troubling you with this account. The young and happy ought not to be wearied with the histories of the ancient and the sick. We should bid adieu to the world when we are no longer proper for it; it is enough if we are excused for being out of our coffin, without fatiguing people till they wish one there. You may depend upon it, therefore, madam, that I will not come to Houghton* Park with any monumental symptoms about me. If by one of those miracles which self-love or blindness firmly believes in, I should grow prodigiously juvenile and healthy before Christmas, I will certainly come and thank you, madam, for all your goodness. If not, you will, I trust, believe my gratitude, till I can assure you of it in Brook Street, where I hope you will still allow me a place by your fireside, in consideration of my having been so long

Your ladyship's most devoted, &c.

LETTER IV.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 15, 1770.

I AM quite ashamed, madam, that your ladyship should ask for such trifles as my writings, and ask so often. I beg your pardon, and obey, to save you any

* Either a slip of the pen for Ampthill, or an allusion to the ruin of Houghton on Lord Ossory's estate.—ED.

more trouble; which is the cause of my sending them in so improper a manner. I have none bound, nor any but what I send. There are, in truth, besides, and I ought to blush that there are so many, the Anecdotes of Painting, the Castle of Otranto, and Richard the Third. The first cannot entertain you; the second, not a second time; and the third must appear dry when no longer a novelty. Your ladyship shall have all these if you please, but be assured that, though nobody's approbation flatters me so much as your ladyship's, it cannot persuade me that my writings deserve half you are so good as to say of them. If you knew how little I am content with them, you would know that I had much rather never hear them mentioned. As I wish to be allowed to see your ladyship and Lord Ossory as much as I may without being troublesome, let it be, madam, without the authorship coming in question. I hold that character as cheap as I do almost everything else, and, having no respect for authors, am not weak enough to have any for myself on that account. It is a much greater honour to be permitted to call myself Yours, &c.

LETTER V.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 15, 1770.

It was lucky for your ladyship and Lord Ossory, that I prevented your doing me the honour of a visit last Monday. The very night I wrote (this day se'n-

night) I was put into my bed, and have not been out of it since but three times, to have it made. I will not tell your ladyship what I have suffered, because lovers and good Christians are alone allowed to brag of their pains, and to be very vain of being very miserable. I am content at present with having recovered my write-ability enough to thank your ladyship and Lord Ossory for your kind intentions, which, for my own sake, I have not virtue enough to decline, nor for your sakes the confidence to accept. Lord Ossory has seen me in the gout, and knows I am not very peevish; consequently you might bear to make me a visit, but as I cannot flatter myself that I shall be able to quit my bedchamber before Tuesday, since, at this instant, I am writing in bed, I dare not ask you, madam, to risk passing any time in a sick chamber.

As nothing would give me more pleasure sincerely than to see your ladyship and Lord Ossory here for a few days, when I could enjoy it, why should not you a short time hence bring Mr. Fitzpatrick, Harry Conway, Charles Fox, or who you please, and make a little October party hither? * It would be the most agreeable honour in the world to me, and I flatter myself, from

* The following is Lord Ossory's own opinion of the social talents of some of the best talkers of his day:—"Horace Walpole was an agreeable lively man, very affected, always aiming at wit, in which he fell very short of his old friend George Selwyn, who possessed it in the most genuine but indescribable degree. Hare's conversation abounded with wit, and perhaps of a more lively kind; so did Burke's, though with much alloy of bad taste; but, upon the whole, my brother the General was the most agreeable man in society of any of them."—May, 1816. —MSS. Ed.

your kind disposition to me, madam, would not be very tedious to you. If you will name your time, nothing *shall* interfere with it. When a fit of the gout has just turned the corner, one flatters one's self that nothing bad can happen, and one talks with an impudent air of immortality—how you would smile if you saw the figure my immortality makes at this moment! I fancy I look very like the mummy of some sacred crane which Egyptian piety bundled up in cered cloths, and called preserving. The very bones of the claw I am writing with are wrapped in a flannel glove. However, your Ladyship sees to how near the end of my existence I am. Yours &c.

LETTER VI.

Arlington Street, June 27, 1771.

I ENCLOSE the ticket your ladyship ordered, and as Mr. Fitzpatrick * may wish to carry his children and some companion with him, I have made the order for five instead of four, and would have added another, but having lately had some disputes about sometimes giving a larger and sometimes a more contracted order, I am forced to confine the rule to four, or as near it as I can; my neighbours wanting to bring all their acquaintance, and taking it ill if they are refused and others indulged; and when your ladyship comes

* Probably Lord Ossory's uncle, grandfather of the present Baron de Robeck.—ED.

amongst us, you will find we are a gossiping set of folks.

I expect to be prodigiously well received at the Resurrection by numberless old folks, whose portraits I have rescued from oblivion in various visits I have made at country-houses. When I have the pleasure of being at Ampthill, I will write the names and histories on the back of the Gowrans and Robinsons, and on the Fitz-arbuthnot and parrot. You will find, madam, an account of Michael Wright* in the third volume of my Anecdotes. Before I received your ladyship's, I had written to Lord Ossory about King Edward's letters,† and expect his commands. Your ladyship's and his for Paris, shall be carefully executed.

I came to town yesterday, and as usual, found that one hears much more news in the country than in London. I have not picked up a penful since I wrote to my lord. I may, if I please, go to another ball to-morrow, at Mrs. A. P.'s, but I think I shall choose to

* Lord Gowran, the grandfather of Lord Ossory, married the granddaughter of Sir John Robinson, Lieutenant of the Tower, in the reign of Charles II. whose picture by Michael Wright, is now at Farming Woods. The following is the history of this painter in the third volume of the "Anecdotes:"—Was born in Scotland, but came to London at the age of sixteen or seventeen, and proved no bad portrait painter. In 1672 he drew for Sir Robert Viner, a whole length of Prince Rupert, in armour, with a large wig. On the back he wrote the prince's title at length, and his own name thus: "Jo. Michael Wright, Lond. pictor regius finivit, 1672." The Earl of Orford had a half-length by him, of Sir Edward Turner, son of Sir Edward, Speaker of the House of Commons, and Chief Baron. On that he called himself "Jos. Michael Wright, Anglus, 1672;" but on the portraits of the judges in Guildhall, he wrote "Scotus."—Ed.

† To Barnaby Fitzpatrick, printed at Strawberry Hill.—Ed.

return to Strawberry. Her nephew, Tom Pitt is going to marry a Miss Wilkinson, a great fortune, sister to Jack Smith's wife. I don't believe your ladyship cares much about these Jacks and Toms.

There is a great hubbub I believe at the other end of the town, where Wilkes is triumphing over all the aldermen, and Hornes and Olivers; but in this quarter the grass would grow if it were not for a few coaches from Ranelagh.

I have sent an injunction to my antiquarian friend, who copied over the letters, to find me out a pattern of a genuine cross, to be erected at Ampthill,* and I am sure he will if there is such a thing above ground, for he is as true a Roman Catholic as it is possible for a Protestant clergyman to be—and there is but a very nice distinction between them, especially when they are antiquaries.

'Tis a mortification, madam, to be able to send you nothing more amusing, but when one knows no news, a short letter is better than a composed one, and anything to dull excuses. I am grown too old for invention, and like other old servants, have no merit but that of attachment. No ancient domestic can boast of that quality more than Yours, &c.

* This was afterwards erected on the supposed site of Queen Catherine's house, with some lines of no great merit by Horace Walpole. The design of the cross is prettier than the poetry; I do not know whether it came from the gentleman here mentioned.—Ed.

LETTER VII.

Paris, Aug. 11, 1771.

I FEAR, madam, I shall return from hence, like many an English ambassador, without having done anything that signifies. I have indeed at last received some canvas and silk from M. Francès, to the value of forty-six livres two sous, which, when the materials shall be manufactured by your ladyship, will, I trust, increase a million-fold. As to snuff-boxes and tooth-pick cases, the vintage has entirely failed this year. I have not been able to find a new one of either sort. The shops complain of a total stagnation of trade, and this some impute to a cross man whom they call Mons. le Chanceleur, who has pulled all the Parliament out by the noses, and occasioned a decrease of 40,000 of those organs of smelling in Paris; and others say, that a certain comptroller-general having left nobody anything to eat, there is but little demand for tooth-pick cases. As I am totally ignorant of commerce, it is impossible for me to judge what truth there is in these hypotheses—all I know is, that I am as well acquainted with the faces of every snuff-box in every shop, as every administration is with Mr. Ellis's. Lord Ossory's commission will be a little better executed—that is, it may be. I have seen three fine clocks, two dearer than the sum he limited, and one under it; but as I could not venture to lay out more or less money than his lordship allowed, I

have made all three sit for their pictures, and shall bring him the designs, that he may throw his handkerchief himself.

Paris is quite empty, even of English. In truth, I live in a hotel full of English, but I know the faces of but one, and of him, scarce the voice; it is my Lord Finlater, who I suppose is dying for love of his future bride, for he is an absolute statue: we have visited thrice, met once, and shall speak to one another next time. Lady Barrymore went yesterday to Compeigne: Marshal Richelieu had orders to take care she had a box at the opera here; but don't tell Junius so.

It is with great satisfaction I have to inform your ladyship that the taste for English gardening makes great progress here, not owing, alas! to mine, but to Mr. Whateley's book, which has been translated. I have been to see a garden almost out of Paris, which has been laid out in our taste at a vast expense; and as it improves upon us, I have here sent your ladyship the plan as well as I could bring it away by memory, at the same time begging you to excuse the badness of the drawing, which does not do justice to the original.

If Lord Ossory should wish to lay out Ampthill in this manner, I will take care to have a more correct plan made; but, indeed, without being upon the spot there is no judging of the effect. There is something so sociable in being able to shake hands across the river from the tops of the two mountains, 9 9, that nothing but so amiable a nation could have imagined

it. Nay, it is a great idea; one thinks one sees the mountain-gods of Parnassus and Ida pulling their *fauteuils* across a continent, and drinking a glass of helicon to the health of their *bergères!*

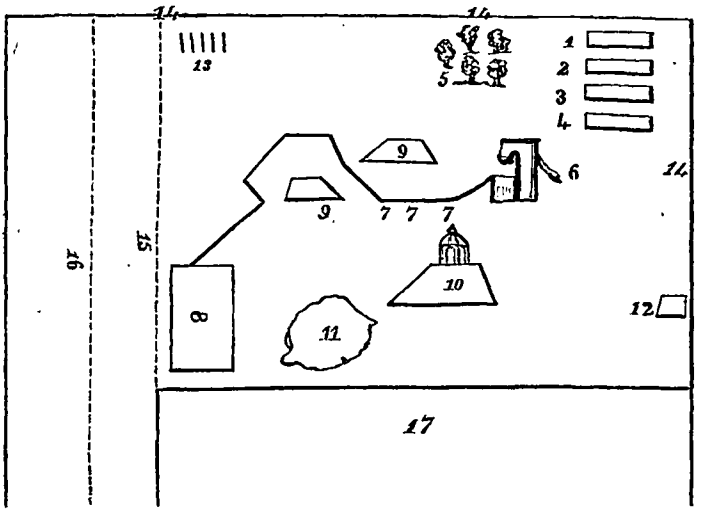


TABLE OF REFERENCES.

1. Slip of corn. 2. Do. of Grass. 3. Do. of weeds, very rural. 4. Do. of oats. 5. Irregular grove. 6. A well and pump that furnishes the river. 7, 7, 7. A serpentine river in a stone channel, four feet wide. 8. A canal. 9, 9. Two mountains, twelve feet high, in the shape of a tanzey-pudding, but not so green as the river. 10. Mount Olympus, with a temple on it. 11. An irregular piece of turf. 12. A fairy, with an Italian front. 13. Slips of grass. 14, 14, 14. The wall. 15. Terrace commanding a superb view over the hot-houses and dunghill. 16. Kitchen-garden with melon frames. 17. French garden.

The rest of my travels I shall reserve till I have the honour of seeing your ladyship at Twickenham. I intend to set out on my return to-morrow se'nnight; and am, madam,

Yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

Arlington Street, Nov. 30, 1771.

THE Duchess of Bedford alarmed me extremely, madam, the night before last, by telling me both your ladyship and Lord Ossory have been very ill. Happily, she added that the worst was over with both. I am, however, very anxious to hear more, especially as last night she knew nothing further. She said you had caught colds by going into your house before it was thoroughly aired; but at least I fear, madam, you carried yours from Twickenham. I will not trouble your ladyship with more at present; but must beg that at least you would be so good as to order some one of your servants to send me a line with an exact account, both of yourself and Lord Ossory.

Arlington Street, Dec. 4, 1771.

MY DEAR LORD,

As it is not agreeable to the principles of distributive justice, (which ought to be a rule to great authors as well as to magistrates,) that Lady Ossory should monopolize all my nonsense, I take the liberty of addressing the following manuscript to your lordship, drawn up for the use of your daughter; and though I must confess a faint imitation, calculated, like Fenelon's Telemachus, to assist in the plan of her education, I had, indeed, another view in send-

ing it to your lordship :—There is rather more abstruse learning in it than might be agreeable to a lady's taste, especially in the allusions to the ancient wisdom of the Egyptians and the mystic doctrines of Zoroaster, without a little taste of which a modern young lady cannot be thoroughly accomplished. If Lady Anne* should draw the least benefit from my instructions, under your lordship's inspection, I should not despair of her being one day or other thought a proper bride for the Grand Duke of Russia, whose education under so wise a mother as the Czarina, assisted by all the philosophers of France, is reckoned the most complete that ever was bestowed on the heir of a Crown. I am, your lordship's most faithful humble servant,

HORACE TRISMEGISTUS.

P.S. I need not say that I think—that I trust, my dear lord, you will not let this foolery go out of your own hands.

THE PEACH IN BRANDY,

A MILESIAN TALE,

FOR THE USE OF THE RIGHT HON. THE LADY ANNE FITZPATRICK.

Fitz-Scanlan Mac Giollal'hadnug, King of Kilkenny, the thousand and fifty-seventh descendant in a right line from Milesius, King of Spain, had an only daughter, called Great A, and by corruption, Grata, who being arrived at years of discretion, and perfectly

* Lord Ossory's infant daughter.—ED.

initiated by her royal parents in the arts of government, the fond monarch determined to resign his crown to her. Having accordingly assembled the senate, he declared his resolution to them; and having delivered his sceptre into the princess's hands, he obliged her to ascend the throne; and, to set the example was the first to kiss her hand and vow eternal obedience to her. The senators were ready to stifle the new Queen with panegyrics and addresses; the people, though they adored the old King, were transported with having a new sovereign; and the University, according to custom immemorial, presented her Majesty, three months after everybody had forgotten the event, with testimonials of the excessive sorrow and excessive joy they felt in losing one monarch and getting another.

Her Majesty was now in the fifth year of her age, and a prodigy of sense and goodness. In her first speech to the senate, which she lisped with inimitable grace, she assured them that her heart was entirely Irish, and that she did not intend any longer to go in leading-strings; as a proof of which she immediately declared her nurse, Prime Minister. The senate applauded this sage choice with even greater encomiums than the last, and voted a free gift to the Queen of a million of sugar-plums, and to the favourite of twenty thousand bottles of usquebaugh. Her Majesty then jumping from her throne, declared it was her royal pleasure to play at blindman's-buff—but such a hubbub arose from the senators pushing

and squeezing and punching one another, to endeavour to be the first blinded, that in the scuffle her Majesty was thrown down, and got a bump upon her forehead as big as a pigeon's egg, which set her a squalling, that you might have heard her to Tipperary. The old King flew into a rage, and snatching up the mace, knocked out the Chancellor's brains, who at that time happened not to have any, [vide the Minutes,] and the Queen-mother, who sat in a tribune above to see the ceremony, fell into a fit and miscarried of twins, who were killed by her Majesty's fright; but the Earl of Bull-a-boo, great butler of the Crown, happening to stand next to the Queen, snatched up one of the dead children, and perceiving it was a male, ran down to the King and wished him joy of the birth of a son and heir. The King, who had now recovered his sweet temper, called him fool and blunderer: upon which Mr. Phelim O'Torture, a zealous courtier, started up with great presence of mind and accused the Earl of Bull-a-boo of high treason, for having asserted that his late Majesty had had any other heir than their present most lawful and most religious sovereign Queen Grata. An impeachment was voted by a large majority, though not without warm opposition, particularly from a celebrated Kilkennian orator, whose name is unfortunately not come down to us, it being erased out of the journals afterwards, as the Irish author whom I copy says, when he became First Lord of the Treasury, as he was during the whole reign of Queen

Grata's succession. The argument of this Mr. Killmorachill, says my author, whose name is lost, was, that her Majesty, the Queen-Mother, having conceived a son before the King's resignation, that son was indubitably heir to the Crown, and consequently, the resignation void, it not signifying an iota whether the child was born dead or alive. It was alive, said he, when it was conceived—here he was called to order by Dr. O'Flaharty, the Queen-mother's man-midwife, and member for the borough of Corbelly, who entered into a learned dissertation on embryos; but he was interrupted by the young Queen's crying for her supper, the previous question for which was carried without a negative—and then the House being resumed, the debate was cut short by the impatience of the majority to go and drink her Majesty's health. This seeming violence gave occasion to a long protest, drawn up by Sir Archee Mac Sarcasm, in which he contrived to state the claim of the departed *fœtus* so artfully, that it produced a civil war, and gave rise to those bloody ravages and massacres which so long laid waste the ancient kingdom of Kilkenny; and which were at last terminated by a lucky accident, well known, says my author, to everybody, but which he thinks it his duty to relate for the sake of those who never may have heard of it. These are his words:—

"It happened that the Archbishop of Tuum, (anciently called Meum by the Catholic clergy,) the great wit of those days, was in the Queen-mother's

closet, who had the young Queen in her lap.* His grace was suddenly seized with a violent fit of the colic, which made him make such wry faces, that the Queen-mother thought he was going to die, and ran out of the room to send for a physician, for she was a pattern of goodness and void of pride. Whilst she was stepping into the servants' hall to call somebody, according to the simplicity of those times, the Archbishop's pains increased, when, perceiving something on the mantel-piece, which he took for a peach in brandy, he gulped it all down at once without saying grace, God forgive him! and found great comfort from it. He had not done licking his lips before the Queen-mother returned, when Queen Grata cried out, 'Mamma, Mamma, the gentleman has eat my little brother!' This fortunate event put an end to the contest, the male line entirely failing in the person of the devoured prince. The Archbishop, however, who became Pope by the name of Innocent III., having afterwards a son by his own sister, named the child Fitzpatrick, as hav-

* Some commentators have ignorantly supposed that the Irish author is guilty of a great anachronism in this passage, for having said that the contested succession occasioned long wars, he yet speaks of Queen Grata at the conclusion of them as still sitting in her mother's lap *like a child*. Now I can confute them from their own state of the question. *Like a child* does not import that she was actually still a child. She only sat *like a child*, and so she might, though thirty years old. Civilians have declared at what period of his life a King may be of age before he is; but Grotius, nor Puffendorff, nor any of the tribe, have determined how long a King or Queen may remain infants, after they are past their infancy. Vide Bishop Warburton's Alliance between Church and State.—H. W.

ing some of the royal blood in its veins; and from him are descended all the younger branches of the Fitzpatricks of our time. Now the rest of the acts of Queen Grata, and all that she did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the Kings of Kilkenny?

LETTER IX.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday Night, June 23, 1771.

My Lord,

I have got your letters again, and the copies, and beg to know which is the safest way of conveying the originals to you. My reverend friend who copied them tells me that one of them, and part of another, are printed in Fuller's Church History, but that need not prevent the printing all together. I must ask your lordship in what manner you would have me print them; I mean, whether for publication, or a smaller number only to give away. I submit to you whether the latter is not the preferable way, for as there are so very few they will barely make a sixpenny pamphlet, and not being all new, people might not think them quite important enough for sale. On the contrary, a smaller number will keep them a curiosity, and yet be sufficient to preserve them. If you like this method, I will print you what number you please, and will send you two or three hundred, and will ask your leave to keep a hundred for myself, as I did for Lord Powis. He had one hundred copies, and I the same;

and in two years one copy was sold at an auction for four guineas—you see I have learnt the mysteries of my trade. I doubt I shall not have time to set about the preface before I leave England, as I have not yet got Fuller, and a book or two more that I shall want.* The long evenings in autumn are my best working hours; and as I flatter myself you will now and then be here at your villa, I can receive your directions.

I have searched in every volume I could think of where I was likely to make discoveries, but can find out nothing that perfectly satisfies me about the foundation and devices of Houghton.† The construction is in the style of a view of Seadbury, Sir Thomas Walsingham's house, in a picture I have of him, consequently might be built by Sir Philip Sidney, who married his daughter. The boar was certainly Sir Philip's crest, and the pheon his arms—nay, there is one of the cyphers in which are several letters of his names; but I can touch upon no scent of his having lived there, or having an estate there. Still, I am clear that none of the emblems relate to the Bruces. Though, as a critic, I have taken liberties with Sir Philip; as an antiquary I venerate him, there being a clear distinction between the ideas we have from our sense, and those we have from our nonsense. As I have no partiality for the Bruces, from either the one or the other, I beg Sir Philip may be worshiped as founder of Houghton. I now

* This refers to the letters of Edw. VI. to Barnaby Fitzpatrick, before mentioned.—Ed.

† The ruin in Lord Ossory's Park, before-mentioned.—Ed.

step two hundred years later to tell my Lady Ossory a match that I have just heard at Lady Blandford's, which is droll enough. Miss Legge, smitten with Colonel Keene's black eyes, has consented to give him her hand. They must, indeed, keep a few sheep at setting out, but I suppose the shepherd expects that Lord North will enable them to enlarge their flock. Lord Villiers is a new object of contention. Mrs. Anne Pitt has made a ball for him—don't be in a hurry—it is not to put her brother's large nose out of joint by her own; no, this is a pure act of friendship. She destines him to Lady Caroline Stuart, Lord Bute's fifth daughter. They are a very homely pair of turtles, and do not much add to the decoration of the great pigeon-house at Ranelagh, where she produces them every night. My Lady Harrington disputes the prize with her; and at least to secure part of it gets him to loo with herself, old Boothby, and Lady Schaub. I pity poor Lady Harriet, who is too charming to be set up to sale.

I hope to have more dignified news to tell you at my return from Paris, where the Duc d'Aiguillon is at last minister. I expect to find many a *Junius* there, at least in ballads; but if ever the French rebel farther than in couplets, the time must be at hand. It is foolish to be presenting remonstrances *after* the King has struck the blow. When they have harangued him into despotism, no philippic will talk him out of it. That lamb and legislatress the Czarina would suffer no patriot orations. By the way, I hear Voltaire

has already half-stifled Monsieur d'Aiguillon with incense. It is just two years since I was witness to a thousand fulsome epistles that the Duchess of Choiseul received from him in praise of her husband.

> If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,
> The brightest, wisest, meanest of mankind!

I know another person, unworthy to be named in such immortal company, who has written a very fulsome letter too to the Dowager d'Aiguillon, not in truth for his own interest, but in hopes of serving a dear old blind friend,* who I fear wants protection.

If you recollect any other commission before I set out this day fortnight be so good to let me know. You allow me, I trust, to end without any formal conclusion.

LETTER X.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 4, 1771.

Though the account your ladyship gives me of yourself is so bad, I cannot but feel my obligations to you for taking so much trouble. There are few, I believe, madam, more interested than I am in your recovery; and were sacrifices or masses in fashion, Venus, or the Virgin Mary, would have a great deal of my custom. You must not indeed stay in the country, but come to town, where your house is dry and warm. Our climate requires to be roasted and boiled as much as our meat. Why do you think we have more coal-

* Himself for Madame du Deffand.—Ed.

mines than all the rest of the world, but because we have more fogs, damps, and rains? You must not tell me that you keep good fires at Ampthill. You cannot make an atmosphere of smoke there; and for air, its great excellence is being changed. You will conclude, madam, that half what I say is for my own sake; so it certainly is: it is my interest that you should be well, and I am persuaded London will restore you sooner than the country. I speak very little for myself in any other respect, for I am chiefly here, and shall be so till after Christmas. I am glad you have the comfort of seeing Lord Ossory recovered: it must have been very melancholy to want each other's company and assistance. I wish I could send you or tell you anything that would divert you; but whether it is the world's fault, or mine, I know nothing. The newspapers have already told you, madam, that the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland are come to Windsor. That he is privately forbidden the Court is certain, for of *she* there is no question; and that Lord Hertford is ordered to tell everybody, as a secret, which they are desired to tell everybody, that there is no road from Windsor or Cumberland House to St. James's. There is a good-natured exception for the Duke's own servants, who having been placed by the King, and having had no hand in the wedding, are allowed to go backwards and forwards. Princess Amelie, where I played the night before last, and whom by the by I do not intend to marry, we having, as the Duke of Norfolk said to the Duchess when

she proposed her niece for his nephew, married one another enough, told us that Lady Holderness had begged her royal highness to contradict the report of an intended match between the Lady Amelie and the Prince of Mecklenburg. I don't know whether your ladyship will understand all this, and whether I have not made such a confusion of Lady Amelies and Princess Amelies, and nephews and nieces, and matches and princes, that my letter will be as difficult to unravel as one of Lord Chatham's long motions in the House of Lords.

I have the satisfaction of announcing to you the arrival of two great personages from France; one is, Mademoiselle Heinel, the famous dancer; the other, King Francis the First. In short, the armour of the latter is actually here, and in its niche, which I have had made for it on the staircase; and a very little stretch of the imagination will give it all the visionary dignity of the gigantic hand in armour that I dreamt of seeing on the balustrade of the staircase at Otranto. If this is not realizing one's dreams, I don't know what is. The two play-houses have been doing the reverse; they have converted the real installation into a vision, especially at Covent Garden, where nymphs and satyrs appear in St. George's Chapel, and behave like good Christians as they are.

The weather is so fine, that forgetting it was December, and that I am not in the spring of my age, I went a-birds' nesting this morning: I cannot say I had any sport; Rosette put up one robin-red-

breast; but we did not kill. The first rat or mouse, or such small deer that she runs down, I will take the liberty of sending your ladyship some venison.

LETTER XI.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 14, 1771.

I AM not a little impatient, madam, to hear of your perfect recovery, of which I am anxiously in doubt, for I think you know too well what pleasure it would give me, not to have confirmed it to me, if you were quite well again. Had you been worse, I think I should have heard it from others, as I have been in town all this week, and returned but to-day. I shall go thither again on Monday to see that greatest of curiosities, a fine dancer at the Opera. Mademoiselle Heinel is to appear on Tuesday, and all the fine gentlemen pay her a compliment they used only to pay to the Speaker, of leaving their hunting, to see her. I hope this will re-establish our Albemarle Street Club and Almacks, which have both been in a very languishing way; the first from the absence of Miss Loyd and Mrs. Fitzroy, who has got another daughter to comfort her for the loss of her mother; and the second, because it is not so *easy to borrow a Jew*, now so many are hanged or run away.

The Princess of Brunswick was expected to-day; but they say will find her mother much better. The

restitution of Falkland's Island came the beginning of the week. If all these prosperities do not cure you, madam, you must be a very disloyal politician. I do not think any other news I can tell you will do you much good. There is a new tragedy at Covent Garden called Zobeide, which I am told is very indifferent, though written by a country gentleman; and there is a new Timon of Athens, altered from Shakspeare by Mr. Cumberland, and marvellously well done, for he has caught the manners and diction of the original so exactly, that I think it is full as bad a play as it was before he corrected it. Lord Lyttelton has published the rest of his Henry the Second, but I doubt has executed it a little carelessly, for he has not been above ten years about it. I began it, but, I don't know how, I was tired. It is so crowded with clouds of words, and they are so uninteresting, that I think one may dispute, as metaphysicians do, whether all the space is a plenum or a vacuum. Lady Sackville told me t'other day of a new discovery, which, I suppose, is metaphysical too—that there is no such colour as grey, but that what we call so, is green or blue. I am rejoiced at it, and have some thoughts of going without powder, and insisting that my hair is green.

Lady Holderness swears on her Bible that there is no truth in the supposed match of her daughter and the Prince of Mecklenburg—and there ends my Gazette. In the Strawberry Courant, there is not a syllable of news. If Lord Ossory has a mind to

enrich Ampthill, Mr. Hamilton has brought over a charming Correggio, and a collection of Tuscan vases, idols, amulets, javelins and casques of bronze, necklaces and ear-rings of gold from Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Sicily, sacrificing instruments, dice of amber, ivory, agate, &c.; in short, enough antiquity to fill your whole gallery at least. Your lord must make haste, or those learned patrons of taste, the Czarina, Lord Clive, or some nabob, will give 50,000*l.* for the collection, though the picture may as yet be had for 3000*l.*, and the antiquities for 8000*l.* They are a little dear, but the first is delightful, and the latter most entertaining. Adieu! my lord and lady, tell me you are both well, and I will not plague you again soon.

THE SEQUEL TO GULLIVER'S TRAVELS.

THE two nations of the giants and the fairies had long been mortal enemies, and most cruel wars had happened between them. At last, in the year 2,000,096, Oberon the Four hundred and Thirteenth had an only daughter, who was called Illipip, which signified the Corking-pin, from her prodigious stature, she being full ...eighteen inches high, which the fairies said was an inch taller than Eve the first fairy. Gob, the Emperor of the giants, had an only son, who was as great a miracle for his diminutiveness; for, at fifteen, he was but seven-and-thirty feet high, and though he was fed with the milk of sixteen elephants every day, and took three hogshead of jelly of lions between every meal, he was

the most puny child that ever was seen, and nobody expected that he would ever be reared to man's estate. However, as it was indispensably necessary to marry him, that the imperial family might not be extinct, and as an opportunity offered of terminating the long wars between the two nations by an union of the hostile houses; ambassadors were sent to demand the Princess of the fairies for the Prince of the giants, who, I forgot to say, was called the Delicate Mountain. The Queen of the fairies, who was a woman of violent passions, was extremely offended at the proposal, and vowed that so hopeful a girl as Corking-pin should not be thrown away upon a dwarf; however, as Oberon was a very sage monarch, and loved his people, he overruled his wife's impetuosity, and granted his daughter. Still the Queen had been so indiscreet as to drop hints of her dissatisfaction before the Princess, and Corking-pin set out with a sovereign contempt for her husband, whom she said she supposed she should be forced to keep in her toothpick-case for fear of losing him. This witticism was so applauded by all the court of fairy, that it reached the ears of Emperor Gob, and had like to have broken off the match.

On the frontiers of the two kingdoms the Princess was met by the Emperor's carriages. A litter of crimson velvet, embroidered with seed pearls as big as ostriches' eggs, and a little larger than a cathedral, was destined for the Princess, and was drawn by twelve dromedaries. At the first stage she found the

bridegroom, who, for fear of catching cold, had come in a close sedan, which was but six-and-forty feet high He had six under-waistcoats of bear-skin, and a white handkerchief about his neck twenty yards long. He had the misfortune of having weak eyes, and when the Princess descended from her litter to meet him, he could not distinguish her. She was wonderfully shocked at his not saluting her, but when his governor whispered him which was she, he spit upon his finger and stretched out his hand to bring her nearer to his eye, but unluckily fixed upon the great mistress of the Queen's household, and lifted her up in the air in a very unseemly attitude, to the great diversion of all the young fairy lords. The lady squalled dreadfully, thinking the Prince was going to devour her. As misfortune would have it, notwithstanding all the Empress's precaution, the Prince had taken cold, and happening at that very instant to sneeze, he blew the old lady ten leagues off, into a mill-pond, where it was forty to one but she had been drowned. The whole cavalcade of the fairies was put into great disorder likewise, by this untoward accident, and the cabinet councillors deliberated whether they should not carry back the Princess immediately to her father, but Corking-pin, it seems, had not found the Prince so disagreeable as she expected, and declared that she would not submit to the disgrace of returning without a husband. Nay, she said, to prevent any more mistakes, she would have the marriage solemnized that night. The nuptial ceremony was accordingly per-

formed by the Archbishop of St. Promentory, but the governor declared that he had the empress's express injunctions not to let them live together for two years, in consideration of the prince's youth and tender constitution. The princess was in such a rage that she swore and stamped like a mad woman, and spit in the archbishop's face. Nothing could equal the confusion occasioned by this outrage. By the laws of Giantland, it was death to spit in a priest's face. The princess was immediately made close prisoner, and couriers were dispatched to the two courts, to inform them of what had happened. By good fortune, the chief of the law, who did not love the archbishop, recollected an old law, which said that no woman could be put to death for any crime committed on her wedding-day. This discovery split the whole nation of giants into two parties, and occasioned a civil war, which lasted till the whole nation of giants was exterminated; and as the fairies, from a factious spirit, took part with the one side or other, they were all trampled to death, and not a giant or fairy remained to carry on either race.

LETTER XII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 6, 1772.

NOTHING but disasters, Madam, since my last. Poor Mr. Fitzherbert hanged himself, on Wednesday. He went to see the convicts executed, that morning; and from thence, in his boots, to his son, having sent

his groom out of the way. At three, his son said, Sir, you are to dine at Mr. Buller's; it is time for you to go home and dress. He went to his own stable and hanged himself with a bridle. They say his circumstances were in great disorder. There have been deep doings at Almack's, but no body has retired into a stable. This paragraph, possibly, may be as old when you receive it, as if it was in the magazine, for my letter will not set out till Thursday, as I cannot yet tell you the whole of a tragedy that happened to myself this very morning — don't be frightened, madam, I am not wind-bound on the banks of Styx, and waiting to send back my letter by Charon.

I was waked very early this morning, by half an hour after nine; (I mean this for flattery, for Mr. Crawfurd says your ladyship does not rise till one;) by the way I was in the middle of a charming dream. I thought I was in the King's library in Paris, and in a gallery full of books of prints, containing nothing but *fêtes* and decorations of scenery. I took down a long roll, on which was painted, on vellum, all the ceremonies of the present reign; there was the young King walking to his coronation; the Regent before, who I thought was alive. I said to him, your royal Highness has a great air; he seemed extremely flattered, when the house shook as if the devil were come for him. I had scarce recovered my vexation at being so disturbed, when the door of my room shook so violently that I thought somebody was breaking it open, though I knew it was not locked. It was broad day-

light, but I did not know that housebreaking might not be still improving. I cried out, Who is there? Nobody answered. In less than another minute, the door rattled and shook still more robberaceously. I called again—no reply. I rung: the housemaid ran in as pale as white ashes, if you ever saw such, and cried, Lud! Sir, I am frightened out of my wits: there has been an earthquake! Oh! I believed her immediately. Philip came in, and, being a Swiss philosopher, insisted it was only the wind. I sent him down to collect opinions in the street. He returned, and owned every body in this and the neighbouring streets were persuaded their houses had been breaking open; or had ran out of them, thinking there was an earthquake. Alas! it was much worse; for you know, madam, our earthquakes are as harmless as a new-born child. At one, came in a courier from Margaret to tell me that five powder mills had been blown up at Hounslow, at half an hour after nine this morning, had almost shook Mrs. Clive, and had broken parts or all of eight of my painted windows, besides other damage. This is a cruel misfortune: I don't know how I shall repair it! I shall go down to-morrow, and on Thursday will finish my report.

Wednesday, 8th.

Well! madam, I am returned from my poor shattered castle, and never did it look so Gothic in its born days. You would swear it had been besieged by the Presbyterians in the Civil Wars, and that, finding it impregnable, they had vented their holy malice on the

painted glass. As this gunpowder-army passed on, it demolished Mr. Hindley's fine bow-window of ancient Scripture histories; and only because your ladyship is my ally, broke the large window over your door, and wrenched off a lock in your kitchen. Margaret sits by the waters of Babylon, and weeps over Jerusalem. I shall pity those she shews the house to next summer, for her story is as long and deplorable as a chapter of casualties in "Baker's Chronicle;" yet she was not taken quite unprepared, for one of the Bantam hens crowed on Sunday morning, and the chandler's wife told her three weeks ago, when the barn was blown down, that ill-luck never comes single. She is, however, very thankful that the china-room has escaped, and says, God has always been the best creature in the world to her. I dare not tell her how many churches I propose to rob, to repair my losses.

As my calamity has brought the Gunpowder Plot into my head, I will transcribe some lines on that occasion, made at Oxford several years ago, which I think will divert Lord Ossory from their great simplicity, and the natural tumble in the last verse:

> Guy Vulpes ardere domum vult Parliamenti:
> Lanternâ cœca conditus ignis erat.
> Lord Mounteagle venit, et narrat Salburiensi;
> Salsburiens Regi narrat, et ille aliis.

Many thanks, lord and lady, for your last letters; yet I wish our correspondence at an end, and that you would come to town. Have you heard, my lord, of Colonel Luttrell's repentance? He intends to do pen-

ance in the House of Commons, and acknowledge his sin in representing Middlesex at the instigation of the devil and Lord Bute—and then vacate his seat. I dare say there will be more joy over him in Middlesex than over ninety and nine just persons that have been duly elected—if so many there be.

George Selwyn has just been here, and told me twenty more dismal stories. Poor Lady Di. Beauclerc is given over at Blenheim from a black vomit. Little Cashiobury was attacked the night before last while he and Lord March were at the great house. The thieves were disappointed, and then invaded a lawyer's house in the neighbourhood, but the master fired a blunderbuss and dispersed them. Some of their brethren were more successful last night in town. Lord Ilchester had sent up *all* his plate by the waggon. It arrived, and there were two of his servants in the house, but this morning not so much as a silver spoon was left! Robbed if one lives in London! blown up in the country! One must really go to the Indies to enjoy one's fortune in safety and quiet. Adieu! madam; I fear this journal is too long.

P.S. I have just reflected antiquarianly, that *pale as ashes* must be one of our most ancient proverbs, and in use before coals were invented; as the ashes of the latter only are black, of wood, grey or pale.

THE SPECTATOR,

No. NONE.

WRITTEN BY NOBODY.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 1772.

Vera bona, atque illis multum diversa.—JUV.

One of the greatest advantages of human reason is that it can assimilate everything to its own nature. To use words less philosophic, man can give an appearance of reason to everything he says. He can lend falsehood the semblance of truth; he can establish false principles, draw false conclusions, form false hypotheses, and yet continue to seem a rational being. One cause of these deceptions is the mysterious and fugitive nature of truth; we have so little real knowledge, and so much is left to guess, that it is no wonder men both deceive themselves and others. Plausible systems were the first great effort of the human understanding. Their seeming possibility established their credit, it being requisite that a greater portion of sense, or a course of long experience, should concur to their destruction. But the slow progress of experience not keeping pace with the alacrity of wit and invention, new systems, equally false, displaced the old, and succeeded to the character of reason, till time and acci-

dent demolished the new fabric, as they had done the former. Yet all this while did reason seem to govern, —a circumstance that may suggest some apprehension whether reason itself be not an *ignis fatuus*. It is allowed that there is much the same portion of sense in every age; we have had a longer series of experience than the ancients, but it is certain that our parts, capacities, understandings, are not superior to theirs. Now, if whole ages rolled away in dreaming, why should we suppose that we possess more reason than they did? To believe that our own age is wiser than the preceding, is exactly such an arbitrary assumption, as that of adhering to any religion because it is the religion of our own country,—a compliment paid to self, and no proof either of our faith or our wisdom.

From this deduction I think it clearly follows, that any system, or the reverse of any system, is equally true. Now as the present age is singularly philosophic, but not endowed with much invention, almost all the new philosophy, being little more than a revival of ancient exploded systems, dressed up in phrases borrowed from experimental process, I would recommend to any man who is ambitious of founding a new sect, to take any obsolete system, to build a new one by reversing it totally; it will supply his want of imagination, and probably hang together better than any theory he could spin out of his own conception or memory.

But as all primitive inventions are naturally simple

it may be difficult, if recourse is had to very ancient systems, to find sufficient matter for contradiction. The opposition, too, may be too obvious. In such case I would recommend the compounding of two ancient theories, which may be contradicted, or so melted together as to contradict one another, with various other combinations, at the discretion of the author. As an instance is the best method of illustration, let us try what may be done. One of the most ancient doctrines handed down to us is, the *transmigration of souls into other bodies.* Another, but far more recent, is the *immortality of the soul,* which, according to Bishop Warburton, was never known to the man who preached it; or which is the same thing, was never preached by the man who knew it, except by his never mentioning it—a pretended new method of induction, but though set forth in five ample volumes, by that learned prelate, solely and singly built on that great aphorism, *Silence gives consent;* a kind of demonstration by which anything may be proved to be in a book from its not being there. Nor by the way ought we to give the total honour of this application of the aphorism to the Reverend Bishop. It was practised, not two centuries I think, on the works of Jansenius by the Church of Rome, who found the famous five propositions which she condemned in his book, though nobody could ever discover them there, either in words or in sense. But to return to my new method of system-making. Pythagoras, or whoever he learned it from, held that souls, after the decease of the bodies to which

they had been annexed, wandered into and successively informed other bodies; a very simple doctrine, but the very reverse of which would be equally sensible. I would therefore (after adopting the converse of the other proposition I mentioned above, viz. the *immortality of the soul*, which I would affirm is mortal) assert, that several souls pass successively into the same body; and that when one soul dies, another immediately takes its place,—a system that, give me leave to say, would account for the various contradictions we observe in mankind much more satisfactorily than the received notice of marriage between one soul and one body, indissoluble but by the death of the latter. It is a far more simple system, and consequently more agreeable to the operations of Nature, who always prefers the easiest and least complex march. My system annihilates that involved system of the passions, which are supposed to occasion the various caprices, follies, crimes that enter into the human composition, which if they existed together and at once, would form madmen instead of rational beings, by drawing the man different ways at the same time, and not leaving him tranquil enough to make an option. On the contrary, if we suppose the soul dies, as it probably does, and that a new one immediately succeeds to its place, a total alteration may naturally ensue; and the man may become as different from his former self, as a new body is that is informed by an old soul which had passed through other bodies. For example, there have been instances of young men hand-

some, strong, well-made, and vigorous, who have passed through the dangerous age of temptation with as much modesty, as much continence, as the most blushing virgin of a northern climate. The same men arrived at years of decrepitude have hurried headlong into the lowest excesses of debauchery, and flung themselves into the arms of common prostitutes, practising all the tricks of enfeebled desire, and purchasing infamy, without acquiring pleasure. As on one side such conduct cannot be the effect of passion, so is it impossible to suppose on the other that it could be the result of the union of the same soul and the same body. But as we are sure the body is the body of the same man, we are reduced to believe that that body is inhabited by another soul. The former is dead, and some lewd old soul has entered into the body, and transported it to actions totally inconsistent with its former behaviour.

Instances, more familiar to us in this country, happen every day. A young man is inflamed with the love of his country, Cato, Leonidas, Epaminondas, fire his imagination, and inspire imitation. Liberty charms him; he is jealous of her; he would risk his life for her safety. He speaks, writes, moves, and drinks for her. He searches records, draws remonstrances, fears prerogative, hopes for public misfortunes, that she may escape in the confusion. A secretary of the treasury waits on him in the evening; he appears next morning at a minister's levee; he goes to court, is captivated by the king's affability, moves an address, drops

a censure on the liberty of the press, kisses hands for a place, bespeaks a birthday coat, votes against Magna Charta, builds a house in town, lays his farms into pleasure-grounds under the inspection of Mr. Brown, pays nobody, games, is undone, asks a reversion for three lives, is refused, finds the constitution in danger, and becomes a patriot once more.

Now can any one believe that the soul, that pure ethereal incorruptible essence, that immortal portion of divinity, given to us for the direction of our lives, that one sole noble, as we are told, of all our actions, can be capable of such and so many other inconsistencies? Undoubtedly not. A soul must be a mortal temporary spirit, which informs our bodies for more or less time, and is far more liable to destruction than the body. It is obnoxious to various accidents; and perhaps may be affected by many outward impressions. It may be like the sensitive plant; the approach of another person's hand, or that person's breath, may be fatal to it. For instance, the hand of a secretary of the treasury, or that person's breath, may kill a soul, though it does good to the annexed body. His breath may be poison to it. Other souls may be of a stronger texture, and, though liable to be soiled, may survive the noxious touch or effluvia. I am persuaded that when a man, hitherto virtuous, becomes vicious, his first soul is departed, and has made room for another of stronger element, which can resist everything but disgust and disappointment.

I will not multiply examples, but any man's medi-

tation will suggest to him how extensive this theory may prove. It will tell him how many systems may be composed only by inverting every proposition. Mr. Asgill acquired a name by denying the necessity of dying. I do not expect less renown for establishing a plurality or succession of souls, in one and the same body. The uncertainty of everything makes everything possible.

The fallibility of sense has persuaded several modern philosophers, that nonsense may be capable of demonstrating truth. Hence have they given power to a non-entity, and design, and contrivance, and execution to what is only acted upon; how else came chance and matter to be erected into the dictators of creation? A *word is enough to the wise*, says a silly old dictum. Let it give place to this improvement, *words satisfy fools;* and with more truth, for what word ever satisfied a wise man? What did a wise man ever learn that did not excite a thirst in him of knowing more? He finds all his knowledge bounded; and can he then be satisfied, when the impediments themselves prove there is something still beyond? As he cannot advance, were it not the best way to go backwards? Nonsense is unlimited; and the capital defect of all philosophers, past and present, is, that they have not pursued their researches far enough. Truth, like the pedigree of a noble family, is carried on only in the right line. Falsehood takes in collaterals, and the genealogy is endless. Its branches people the earth; and the descendants of the cursed Cain found and pos-

sess empires, while the race of the beloved David is poor, despised, and unknown.

LETTER XIII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 25, 1773.

PROUD I am indeed, madam, when such lines as mine, like a coarse, ugly bulbous root, can produce such flowers! Next to the honour of being your lover, what glory can be equal to that of being your Apollo? You have explained to me that old story of his turning his mistress into a laurel, and the devil is in it if I have not as good a title to a chaplet of it as he had. Well, methinks, it is ten times more creditable to wear a garland stripped from one's lady's own fingers, than to dress one's self up in honour of one's own self. Your verses are charming, delightful; write on, write on, madam: you shall have two dozen bottles of Aganippe by the next coach. I am going to bespeak a side-saddle for Pegasus; and the moment I am able to dress, that is, undress, like a god, you may depend on my appearing to you in a dream, as like the Apollo Belvedere as two peas; so pray don't pretend to lay your next poem to Lord Ossory, for it will not be his.

Mr. Crawfurd came in and read your verses twice with great admiration. They are natural, easy, and genteel. I am charmed to be your Phaon, as well as your Phœbus, and sacrifice all my beauties to you, *tutte quante.* I do not think I should stoop *to* even

an *affaire passagère* with Melpomene, but alas! I, to talk of beauties! who have not been out of my bed till to-day since Tuesday night last. The gout returned the Friday before into six places, and I have lain flowing through bootikins, and dissolving like a Jupiter Pluvius; but you shall not be tired, madam, with the details—especially as I doubt they would compose a considerable part of my poor remainder!

I flatter myself I shall see Lord Ossory to-morrow. If he carries you back any news, he must make it, for none grows here. There is a new opera that pretends to be liked, and consequently is crowded to excess. Lord Holderness gives his Telemachus a ball on Wednesday, and the ladies give themselves another the same night at their club. This is all I, who hear everything by seeing everybody, can tell you. Who Fatima *la questionneuse* is, I do not guess. One of the few on whom I have not set eyes, is Mr. Fitzpatrick; but, as he wrote my epitaph, he probably thinks I am dead.

I had forgotten—there is a book you will see, that makes and intends to make noise enough. It calls itself, "Letters to Lord Mansfield." It is no panegyric: it is not written by Wilkes. Lord Bristol could not behave to my Lord Chief Justice with more decorum; Mr. Dyson twist and turn, and torture him with more subtlety; nor the gentle Serjeant Surgeon, Mr. Hawkins, soothe him to have his legs and arms cut off, or persuade him only to allow him to extract his heart, and rinse it and put it back, with more deli-

cacy. This tender intercourse is penned by Mr. Andrew Stuart: it is not yet published, but the Duchess of Bedford, who had two copies, gave me one, and I have perused it with much edification: indeed it is admirable, and it must be confessed that a Scot dissects a Scot with ten times more address than Churchill and Junius. They know each other's sore places better than we do.

Tuesday, half an hour after three.

No news of Lord Ossory; at least, none for me. If he is arrived, he will dine with Maccaroons, and be hurried with the tide to Mademoiselle Heinel.

Well! there is no reason, because the husband does not come near me, that I should not thank the wife for her dear poetry. Can I have a better opportunity than when he is running after a dancer?

Let him be charmed with her *many twinkling feet*, I declare I would erect a statue of your ladyship, like a tenth muse, if unfortunately you would not be obliged to be only the eleventh, for I hear Lord Bute has lately bricked up an old statue of one Mrs. Hutchins, a friend of Mr. Heron, which he found in the garden at Luton, and bedizened it with a coronet and emblems proper to one of the nine ladies, your predecessors, in honour of —— Oh! I do not guess whom —yes, yes, I do; to be sure, in memory of his mother-in-law, Lady Mary Wortley; but what a strange creature I am, to have forgot scolding for your not finishing your verses. I declare I will print my fragments of living authors. Pray don't let me be one

of the points in which you resemble Sappho, if you have a mind that people should say so of me,

Blest as the immortal Gods is he, who has the
honour of being your ladyship's devoted

PHAON THE SECOND.

P. S. Pray remember that, as King Rhoderic turned his harp into a harpsichord, you must convert your guitar into a lyre.

LETTER XIV.

Arlington Street, Feb. 4, 1773.

THIS pretends to be at most but half a letter, and indeed is little more than a cover to Lauragais's epistle to Bottarelli, which your ladyship ordered me to send; and replies to a few questions I omitted. Fashionable as I am, and *charming*, my attractions are not great enough to draw Miss Pelham hither. I should neither flatter her nor fret her, and anything is insipid to her that does not make her temper ferment. On the other hand, I keep such sober company, that I shall take care not to scandalize them with your ladyship's profane conundrums. I have not even guessed. I have not seen Lady Craven's poetry, nor anything of Lady Jane and her Dutch. I have seen Lord L.'s —— what shall I call it? in which he says he delivered Lord Townshend's message exactly, but hopes the public will be so good as to believe he delivered it wrong. Lord Charlemont, whom I have just seen,

has great confidence in Lord Bellamont's recovery, though they have not yet discovered where the ball is lodged. The accounts of my nephew are much more favourable, and prove that he does not always want his reason. The weather is so bitter that I must not dare to recover,—indeed I can scarce keep myself warm on the hearth where I sit, and my fingers beg to be dismissed.

LETTER XV.

Arlington Street, Feb. 11, 1773.

How can you write when the hands are numbed and the eyes put out? Alas! madam, you would have wanted many a sheet of nonsense if I could not write like Buchinger, without hands, feet, and move without eyes. I have had a violent cold, that put out the latter, and has brought the gout, not only back into both feet, but into my cheek, which has kept me awake, and has now, as the gout could not make me leaner, made half of my face much fatter. In short, here I am, going into my twentieth week, and in pain from head to foot, though not more than is *amusing*—at least I bear it with so much tranquillity, that I cannot conceive why they make such a rout about Job's patience; but saints are so much flattered and cuddled, that a poor sinner with twenty more virtues cannot obtain a good word. I declare I have behaved with more good humour for these

ve months, than half the canting martyrs in the lubric; and then comes my good Lady Ossory, and as provoking as Madam Job herself, tells me I am not so patient as herself. By Jove, as my Lord Hertford says, for fear of swearing, but no—nothing shall spoil my temper—stay, stay, you talk of solitude—can solitude pet one like folks one is forced to let in? If it had not been for a fit of laughing, I really should have lost my *sang froid* t'other morning. My Phœnician, Irish, antiquarian friend, kept me two hours with a new system of the Mosaic creation, which he has discovered to be the true meaning of the book of Genesis. He told me this world had originally been all mud, and was inhabited by a set of animals proper to such a quagmire; that it was the natural progress of things, and that there were many orbs round the sun now changing from water to earth. Lord! said I, a little fired, why you talk as if there were several worlds hung out to dry. Instead of being angry, he replied gravely, and glad to find I was so apt a disciple. *Just that,*—no, I own, I could then keep my countenance no longer, and so resumed the empire of my temper.

> But, madam,
> To cut things short, let 's come to Adam;

or rather to his descendants; and in the first place to that grand-daughter of his that is always in my mind, your ladyship. *You have to be dug up again, and have your ashes raked into.* You must not wonder; people will violate your dust, if they find verses mixed

with it, as they did in Laura's tomb. I give Mrs. Fitzroy credit, and will never believe that your answer to my Shell-lines were the first you ever wrote—unless, like Gray, you were a perfect poet at your first appearance. If Harmony and Ease are the rust you contract in retirement, you may send Lord Ossory to polish us, not to learn the newest varnish—but yes, let him come; he shall be taught to wear a black coat, red waistcoat, and red sash, and dance quadrilles with nymphs in white satin, trimmed with flowers; or, as there was a tredrille of quadrilles at the French Ambassador's, he may, if he chooses it, and the weather is cold enough, be dressed in brown silk with cherry waistcoat and breeches. One of the bands succeeded very ill, and as Swift makes the physician say to a lady in the old ballad on quadrille, should have been told, *non debes quadrillare.* When your lord has taken his degrees in these sports, he must then learn and teach your ladyship a Cossack dance, and you must both dance it as well as the Prince and Princess Czartoriski. In the mean time, I shall be exceedingly glad to have him first here. I trust he knows how happy he makes me by having so much goodness for me.

My nephew is not well yet, nor do I like the accounts of him; he is less recovered than I had been assured. Lord Bellamont is thought out of danger; yet Lady Greenwich, on Lord Townshend's account, put off her assembly. His lordship, full of sensibility too, wrote a buffoon letter to Mr. Foote the very night

of the duel. Garrick, by the negotiation of a Secretary of State, has made peace with Foote, and by the secret article of the treaty is to be left out of the puppet-show. Colman has been half murdered by a divine out of jealousy, who keeps Miss Miller; and *à propos* to puppets, there is a Mrs. Wright arrived from America, to make figures in wax of Lord Chatham, Lord Lyttelton, and Mrs. Macaulay. Lady Aylesbury literally spoke to a waxen figure of a house-maid in the room, for the artistess has brought over a group, and Mrs. Fitzroy's aunt is one of them.

What shall I tell you more, my lord and lady, of equal dignity with balls, quadrilles, puppet-shows, duels, and waxworks? Oh! of the House of Commons. Lord North is turned into Wilkes; the English of which is, that he was beaten on Tuesday, on the half-pay for the Navy, and had but the famous number 45 with him, against 154. You may imagine this event makes some folks stare, and others laugh; for my part I am convinced Lord North was in the wrong, for the patriot Sir Gilbert Elliott headed the opposition; and some say the K—— himself will resign if his minister is so parsimonious.

Mr. Craufurd intended to be with you to-day, but as yesterday was to be spent in reading papers, and examining witnesses, on the affairs of St. Vincent, the debate will not come on till to-morrow, and will keep him here.

The Duke of Northumberland lost 2,000*l.* at quince, at the ball; the victorious name of Marlborough won most of it.

I this moment hear that Friday will again be passed in examination, and that the debate will not be till Monday.

LETTER XVI.

Arlington Street, March 11, 1773.

I WAS unlucky, madam, and did not see Lord Ossory the two last days. I hope you did not like *les loix de Minos* which I sent by him.

We have two new tragedies: I read the two first acts of the one and the three last of the other, and they sufficed. Mr. Home's "Alonzo" seems to be the story of David and Goliah, worse told than it would have been if Sternhold and Hopkins had put it into metre.

Did your lord bring you the heroic Epistle to Sir W. Chambers? I am going mad about it, though there is here and there a line I hate. I laughed till I cried, and the oftener I read it the better I like it. It has as much poetry as the "Dunciad," and more wit and greater facility. It is said to be Anstey's, and certainly is not unworthy of the Bath Guide; but I shall dread his next production, lest he should tumble again as he did in his second piece.

The occupation of the week is the new quadrilles for Monday. You country gentle folks, who believe

even the Gazette, conclude, I suppose, from the court-mourning that they will be dressed like pall-bearers, in black, with sashes of white sarcenet. No such thing. Being antiquarians or historians, one set is to appear like the court of Henri Quatre—Mrs. Hobart, perhaps, as *la belle Gabrielle;* and with so much propriety, to be sure their tune will be, *Quand Biron voulut danser.* The other band, aiming at accuracy, said they must be contemporaries, and accordingly pitched upon the reign of our Charles the Second. They have, however, been shoved an hundred years back, and are to dance the brawls in ruffs and fardingales. I am afraid I shall not be able to see these carousals: though I go out twice a day, it is only like a witch upon my crutch; and though masquerading is so much the fashion, I do not care to appear with anything beneath a crook.

My Lord Chesterfield bought a "Claude"* the other day for four hundred guineas, and a "Madame de la Valliere" for four. He said, "Well! if I am laughed at for giving so much for a landscape, at least it must be allowed that I have my woman cheap." Is not it charming to be so agreeable quite to the door of one's coffin?

Mr. Burke is returned from Paris, where he was so much the mode that, happening to dispute with the philosophers, it grew the fashion to be Christians. St. Patrick himself did not make more converts.

* In a letter, written on the next day to Sir H. Mann, he calls this picture a "Poussin, which somebody was so good as to paint a few months ago, for Claude."—Ed.

As Lady Mary* is with you, I will not attempt more news. Selwyn is to be at your inn on his way to meet the Carlisles. He and Lady Mary will know a thousand histories of Almack's and other clubs that do not reach such an antiquated creature as I am in a fortnight. I have not heard a more recent duel than that of Chevychase, or the one between Mrs. F. and Miss P. They have not found the Ball in the latter yet. Good night to the good company.

LETTER XVII.

Arlington Street, March 16, 1773.

YOUR ladyship is but too apt to think of me far above my merit; yet never did you overrate my parts so much as in bestowing the Heroic Epistle on me. However, excuse me for saying, that, if in one respect you have done me greatly too much honour, you have at least lowered my character in another. What must I be, if, living in intimacy with Lord Holland, and being a frequent witness of his unhappiness, I had stabbed him by a most barbarous line? I must be a rascal, and a brute: after that need I, and yet I do, give you my honour solemnly that that Epistle is not mine. I hope you, madam, and Lord Ossory will treat me as I should deserve, if you ever find it is. Having said this very seriously, I have no scruple to own how much I admire that poem, and care not who knows I

* Lady Mary Fox, afterwards Lady Holland, Lord Ossory's sister.—ED.

do. To-day I heard that other relations of royalty are more guilty than I am; the Epistle is given to Temple Lutterel. I doubt it; but, if he is the author, I am sure the Duchess of Cumberland has better poets for her kin than the Duchess of Gloucester has.

About Sir John Dalrymple I have very little to say, madam. I did not want to know that Charles II. was a knave, or James and his daughter Anne drivellers. If Algernon Sidney took money from France, it was making one tyrant help to pull down another, and that were a crime my conscience would not be much shocked at. In truth, I am rather tired of the subject; the town and the newspapers have so fully discussed the book, that I neither listen to the one nor read the other. If it is comfortable to any scoundrel to find himself in better company than he expected, to be sure he has nothing to do but to be introduced by Sir John Dalrymple into history.

I am launched little into the world yet. I was not at the ball last night, and have only been at the Opera, where I was infinitely struck with the Carrara, who is the prettiest creature upon earth. Mrs. Hartley I am to find still handsomer, and Miss Linley is to be the superlative degree. The King admires the last, and ogles her as much as he dares to do in so holy a place as an oratorio, and at so devout a service as Alexander's Feast. To the club I shall go to-night for the first time, but have not yet seen Thomyris or Thalestris. I was t'other morning at Lady Powis's; her great room is hung with a glorious scarlet damask.

She told me it was only silk and worsted ; I could not believe my eyes, but insisted it came from Genoa. She vowed it was made in Spitalfields ; the sound struck me ; I asked if that chamber had not been the scene of battle ? and, as it was, I have desired that it may for the future be called *Spittlefields*.

There was a new play by Dr. Goldsmith last night, which succeeded prodigiously ; but how is it possible your ladyship can bear such stuff as " Alonzo," without characters or probability ? A gentlewoman embraces her maid when she expects her husband ; he goes mad with jealousy, without discovering what he ails, and runs away to Persia, where the post comes in from Spain with news of a duel that is to be fought the Lord knows when ! As Persian princes love single combat as well as if they had been bred in Lucas's coffee-house, nobody is surprised that the prince of Persia should arrive to fight a duel that was probably over before he set out. The wife discovers the prince to be her own husband, and the lad her own son, and so, to prevent mischief, stabs herself, and then tells the whole story, which it was rather more natural to do first. The language is as poor as the plot. Somebody asked me, apropos to the Heroic Epistle, what prose *the Home* had ever written ? I said I knew none but his poetry. His tragedy comes just in time to prove I was in the right.

Your ladyship's conclusion of your letter being copied from King James's, I dare not trust to such flattering, because Jesuitical sounds ; but were there any

reality in your promises, I would sacrifice the three goddesses* above named, and be content with the Helen that offers to be as *kind as I can desire.* She may depend on my being as grateful as *she can expect* from a Paris a little *sur le retour.*

P. S.—George Selwyn has raked himself into a fever, but hopes to be able to meet his friend at Highgate at least.

LETTER XVIII.

Strawberry Hill, March 27, 1773.

WHAT play makes you laugh very much, and yet is a very wretched comedy? Dr. Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer." Stoops, indeed! — so she does, that is, the muse; she is draggled up to the knees, and has trudged, I believe, from Southwark fair. The whole view of the piece is low humour, and no humour is in it. All the merit is in the situations, which are comic; the heroine has no more modesty than Lady Bridget, and the author's wit is as much *manqué* as the lady's; but some of the characters are well acted, and Woodward speaks a poor prologue, written by Garrick, admirably.

You perceive, madam, that I have boldly sallied to a play; but the heat of the house and of this sultry March half killed me, yet I limp about as if I was young and pleased. From the play I travelled to Upper Grosvenor Street, to Lady Edgecumbe's, supped at Lady Hert-

* "The Carrara," "Mrs. Huntley," "Miss Linley."

ford's: that macaroni rake, Lady Powis, who is just come to her estate and spending it, calling in with news of a fire in the Strand at past one in the morning, Lady Hertford, Lady Powis, Mrs. Howe, and I, set out to see it, and were within an inch of seeing the Adelphi buildings burnt to the ground. I was to have gone to the Oratorio next night for Miss Linley's sake, but, being engaged to the French ambassador's ball afterwards, I thought I was not quite Hercules enough for so many labours, and declined the former.

The house was all arbours and bowers, but rather more approaching to Calcutta, where so many English were stewed to death; for as the Queen would dismaid of honour herself of Miss Vernon till after the Oratorio, the ball-room was not opened till she arrived, and we were penned together in the little hall till we could not breathe. The quadrilles were very pretty: Mrs. Damer, Lady Sefton, Lady Melbourn, and the Princess Czartoriski in blue satin, with blond and collets montés à la reine Elizabeth; Lord Robert Spencer, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Lord Carlisle, and I forget whom, in like dresses with red sashes, de rouge, black hats with diamond loops and a few feathers before, began; then the Henri Quatres and Quatresses, who were Lady Craven, Miss Minching, the two Misses Vernons, Mr. Storer, Mr. Hanger, the Duc de Lauzun, and George Damer, all in white, the men with black hats and white feathers flapping behind, danced another quadrille, and then both quadrilles joined; after which Mrs. Hobart, all in gauze and spangles, like a spangle-

pudding, a Miss I forget, Lord Edward Bentinck, and a Mr. Corbet, danced a pas de quatre, in which Mrs. Hobart indeed performed admirably.

The fine Mrs. Matthews in white, trimmed down all the neck and petticoat with scarlet cock's feathers, appeared like a new macaw brought from Otaheite; but of all the pretty creatures next to the Carrara, who was not there, was Mrs. Bunbury; so that with her I was in love till one o'clock, and then came home to bed. The Duchess of Queensberry had a round gown of rose-colour, with a man's cape, which, with the stomacher and sleeves, was all trimmed with mother-of-pearl earrings. This Pindaric gown was a sudden thought to surprise the duke, with whom she had dined in another dress. Did you ever see so good a joke?

I forgot to tell your ladyship that Miss Loyd* is in the new play by the name of Rachael Buckskin, though he has altered it in the printed copies. Somebody wrote for her a very sensible reproof to him, only it ended with an indecent *grossièreté*. However, the fool took it seriously, and wrote a most dull and scurrilous answer; but, luckily for him, Mr. Beauclerk and Mr. Garrick intercepted it.

Lord Chesterfield was dead before my last letter that foretold his death, set out. Alas! I shall have no more of his lively sayings, madam, to send you. Oh yes! I have his last: being told of the quarrel in

* Miss Biddy Buckskin, in "She Stoops to Conquer," mentioned by Marlow.

Spitalfields, and even that Mrs. F. struck Miss P., he said, "I always thought Mrs. F. a *striking* beauty.

Thus, having given away all his wit to the last farthing, he has left nothing but some poor witticisms in his will, tying up his heir by forfeitures and jokes from going to Newmarket.

I wrote this letter at Strawberry, and find nothing new in town to add but a cold north-east that has brought back all our fires and furs. Pray tell me a little of your ladyship's futurity, and whether you will deign to pass through London.

LETTER XIX.

Arlington Street, April 31, 1773.

It is most true, madam, that I did purpose to regale myself with a visit to Ampthill; but this winter, which has trod hard upon last week's summer, blunted my intention for a while, though revivable in finer weather. Oh! but I had another reason for changing my mind; you are leaving Ampthill, and I do not mean only to write my name in your park-keeper's book. Yes, in spite of your ladyship's low spirited mood, you are coming from Ampthill, and you are to be at Strawberry Hill to-morrow se'nnight. You may not be in the secret, but Lord Ossory and I have settled it, and you are to be pawned to me while he is at Newmarket. He told me you certainly would if I asked it, and as they used to say in ancient writ, I do

beg it *upon the knees of my heart.* Nay, it is unavoidable; for though a lady's word may be ever so crackable, you cannot have the conscience to break your husband's word, so I depend upon it. I have asked Mr. Craufurd to meet you, but begged he would refuse me, that I might be sure of his coming. Mrs. Meynel has taken another year's lease of her house, so you probably, madam, will not be tired of me for the livelong day for the whole time you shall honour my mansion. Your face will be well and your fever gone a week before to-morrow se'nnight, and you will look as well as ever you did in your life, that is, as you have done lately, which is better than ever you did before. You must not, in truth, expect that I your shepherd should be quite so fit to figure in a fan mount. Besides the gout for six months, which makes some flaws in the bloom of elderly Arcadians, I have been so far from keeping sheep for the last ten days, that I have kept nothing but bad hours; and have been such a rake that I put myself in mind of a poor old cripple that I saw formerly at Hogarth's auction: he bid for the Rake's Progress, saying, "I *will* buy my own progress," though he looked as if he had no more title to it than I have, but by limping and sitting up. In short, I have been at four balls since yesterday se'nnight, though I had the prudence not to stay supper at Lord Stanley's. That festival was very expensive, for it is the fashion now to make romances rather than balls. In the hall was a band of French horns and clarionets in laced uniforms and feathers. The dome

of the staircase was beautifully illuminated with coloured glass lanthorns; in the ante-room was a bevy of vestals in white habits, making tea; in the next, a drapery of sarcenet, that with a very funereal air crossed the chimney, and depended in vast festoons over the sconces. The third chamber's doors were heightened with candles in gilt vases, and the ball-room was formed into an oval with benches above each other, not unlike pews, and covered with red serge, above which were arbours of flowers, red and green pilasters, more sarcenet, and Lord March's glasses, which he had lent, as an upholsterer asked Lord Stanley 300*l.* for the loan of some. He had burst open the side of the wall to build an orchestra, with a pendant mirror to reflect the dancers, *à la Guisnes;* and the musicians were in scarlet robes, like the candle-snuffers who represent the senates of Venice at Drury Lane. There were two more chambers at which I never arrived for the crowd. The seasons, danced by himself, the younger Storer, the Duc de Lauzun and another, the youngest Miss Stanley, Miss Poole, the youngest Wrottesley and another Miss, who is likewise anonymous in my memory, were in errant shepherdly dresses without invention, and Storer and Miss Wrottesley in banians with furs, for winter, cock and hen. In six rooms below were magnificent suppers. I was not quite so sober last night at Mons. de Guisnes', where the evening began with a ball of children, from eighteen to four years old. They danced amazingly well, yet disappointed me, so many

of them were ugly; but Dr. Delawarr's two eldest daughters and the Ancaster infanta performed a *pas de trois* as well as Mdlle. Heinel, and the two eldest were pretty; yet I promise you, madam, the next age will be a thousand degrees below the present in beauty. The most interesting part was to observe the anxiety of the mothers while their children danced or supped: they supped at ten in three rooms. I should not omit telling you that the Vernons,* especially the eldest, were not the homeliest part of the show. The former quadrilles then came again upon the stage, and Harry Conway the younger was so astonished at the agility of Mrs. Hobart's bulk, that he said he was sure she must be hollow. The tables were again spread in five rooms, and at past two in the morning we went to supper. To excuse *we*, I must plead that both the late and present chancellor, and the solemn Lord Lyttelton, my predecessors by some years, stayed as late as I did,—and in good sooth the watchman went four as my chairman knocked at my door.

Such is the result of good resolutions! I determined during my illness to have my colt's tooth drawn, and lo! I have cut four new in a week. Well! at least I am as grave as a judge, looked as rosy as Lord Lyttelton, and much soberer than my Lord

* Lord Ossory's sisters, by the second marriage of his mother, Evelyn, Countess of Upper Ossory, with Richard Vernon, Esq. Harriet, the eldest, married the late Earl of Warwick; Caroline, married the late Robert Percy Smith, Esq.; Elizabeth did not marry. They are none of them now alive. They are described in the poem of "The Three Graces," in Walpole's works.—Ed.

Chancellor. To shew some marks of grace, I shall give up the opera, (indeed it is very bad,) and go and retake my doctor's degrees among the dowagers at Lady Blandford's; and intending to have no more diversions than I have news to tell your ladyship, I think you shall not hear from me again till we meet, as I shall think it, in heaven.

LETTER XX.

Arlington Street, June 4, 1773.

THE royalty of my niece and nieceling give me very little pleasure indeed, madam. You will believe me, I trust, at last, now it is *proved*, as I always assured you, that I knew nothing of the wedding till it was publicly declared. You must have heard by this time of the depositions that have been registered. If you ever call me mysterious again, I will appeal to the books of the Privy Council.

It is not possible for me to make you a visit yet; poor Lord Orford and his affairs take up my whole time, and keep me in town, much against my will. He is not only worse, but seems growing childish, in which state he may live a great many years. His mother, who was turned to stone sooner than Niobe, will not come over nor concern herself about him. Nobody has authority to regulate his affairs, which run to ruin without having recourse to Chancery, which is too shocking a step. We cannot sell his

horses, and one of the best has literally been starved by his ministers. I beg pardon for troubling your ladyship with such details; but they are both my excuse and all my news.

The East India bill has gone through the committee, and the Parliament will probably break up in a fortnight. Great ocean's king is going to see his kingdom. Lady Caroline Seymour is dead of a putrid fever: Mr. Seymour will probably very soon try again for a future Duke of Somerset. Lord Bute has voided a quarry of gall stones; one of them is so large, that it takes place of an immense one in the museum: as nobody would believe he was ill, I hope it will be registered too, in the annals of the Privy Council. Lord Grosvenor has been at Gloucester House; if the Duchess of Cumberland had lain in, I suppose he would have offered to stand godfather with Madame Rheda, or the Countess Dennoff. If you ask me who are to be the other gossips, I swear council-books I do not know.

LETTER XXI.

Strawberry Hill, past midnight, June 11, 1773.

UNLESS I borrow from my sleep, I can certainly have no time to please myself. I am this minute arrived here, madam, and being the flower of chivalry, I sacrifice, like a true knight, the moments I steal from my rest to gallantry. Save me, or I shall become a solicitor in Chancery, unless business and fatigue overset my head, and reduce me to my poor nephew's

state. Indeed, I am half hurried out of my senses. Think of me putting queries to lawyers, up to the ears in mortgages, wills, settlements and contingent remainders. My lawyer is sent away that I may give audience to the Honourable Mr. Manners, the genuine, if not the legitimate, son of Lord William. He came civilly yesterday morning to ask me if he might not seize the pictures at Houghton, which he heard were worth threescore thousand pounds, for nine thousand he has lent Lord Orford. The vulture's throat gaped for them all—what a scene is opened! Houghton will be a rookery of harpies—I doubt there are worse scenes to follow, and black transactions! What occupation chalked out for an end of a life that I had calculated for tranquillity, and which gout and law are to divide between them!

In the midst of this prospect must I keep up the tone of the world, go shepherdizing with maccaronies, sit up at loo with my Lady Hertford, be witness to Miss Pelham's orgies, dine at villas and give dinners at my own. 'Tis well my spirits and resolution have survived my youth: you have heard how my mornings pass—now for the rest. Consultations of physicians, letters to Lady Orford, sent for to my brother, decent visits to *my* court, sup at Lady Powis's on Wednesday, drink tea with all the fashionable world at Mr. Fitzroy's farm on Thursday, blown by a north wind there into the house, and whisk back to Lady Hertford's; this morning to my brother's to hear of new bills, away to dine at——, Muswell Hill, with the Beauclerks, and florists and natural

historians, Banks and Solanders; return to town, step to ask a friend whether reversions of jointures can be left away, into my chaise and hither. To-morrow come two Frenchmen to dinner—on Monday, a man to sell me two acres immensely dear as a favour,—Philip, I cannot help it, you must go and put him off; I have not a minute, I must go back to-morrow night to meet the lawyers at my brother's on Sunday morning. Margaret comes in, "Sir, Lady Bingham desires you will dine with her at Hampton Court on Tuesday;" I cannot. "Sir, Captain What-d'ye-call'm has sent twice for a ticket to see the House"—Don't plague me about tickets. "Sir, a servant from Isleworth brought this parcel." What the deuce is in it? —only printed proposals for writing the lives of all British writers, and a letter to tell me I could do it better than anybody, but as I may not have time, Dr. Berkenhout proposes to do it, and will write mine into the bargain, if I will but be so good as to write it first and send it him, and give him advice for the conduct of his work, and point out materials, and furnish him with anecdotes.

My dear madam, what if you should send him this letter as a specimen of my life! Alas, alas! I have already lost my lilac tide. I have heard but one nightingale this year, and my farmer cut my hay last Tuesday morning without telling me, just as I was going to London. Is it to be borne? O for the *sang froid* of an Almackian, who pursues his delights,

"Tho' in the jaws of ruin and codille!"

Thank you a thousand times, madam, for your letter, which I received as I got into my chaise, and which called for this. Believe me, Lady Orford's absence will not mend matters—I know not what will. For my royal niece, her spirits, like her uncle's, do not sink under difficulties: her beauty I think they augment. The duke is in no dangerous way, as the papers say. I hope he will not lose his temper neither. All I fear is, lest party should want to make him an instrument of its purpose, and lest resentment should drive him to that course. I drop a soft word when I have an opportunity; but where one has no interest, one does not increase it by moderation or contradiction.

Good night, madam; how comfortable to have nothing better than militia to do!

P. S.—If I run into arrears, do not wonder nor repine, for can I know news or politics in the midst of such a scene of confusion as I have sketched?

LETTER XXII.

Arlington Street, June 21, 1773.

It is very fortunate for me, madam, that what is *not* in my letters excites your ladyship's and Lord Ossory's curiosity. When I have nothing to say, I will be very mysterious: it will give me, besides, an air of importance at the post-office. My summer will certainly make me a very dull correspondent, unless

my new neighbour Lady Bridget enlivens us mightily. I have not yet seen her, Mrs. Meynel, or my new friend Lady Bingham, for though I have been five days at Strawberry, I have only visited the Benchers yet, Lady Blandford and the Duchess of Newcastle. Mr. Conway, Lady Aylesbury, Lady Lyttelton, and the Churchills passed Thursday and Friday with me, and quitted me on Saturday for the review of the Blues. On Thursday, as we were at dinner, we heard music, and looking out, saw three village fiddlers on the lawn. I sent to ask the reason: they said they were come to congratulate my honour on my wedding. Mr. Conway's servants were come with favours for the marriage of his nephew and your lordship's cousin, and I had the credit of the espousals. I assure you I am very happy that I am related to you by any of these ways.

On Friday we went to see—oh, the palace of palaces!—and yet a palace *sans crown, sans coronet*, but such expense! such taste! such profusion! and yet half an acre produces all the rents that furnish such magnificence. It is a Jaghire got without a crime. In short, a shop is the estate, and Osterley Park is the spot. The old house I have often seen, which was built by Sir Thomas Gresham; but it is so improved and enriched, that all the Percies and Seymours of Sion must die of envy. There is a double portico that fills the space between the towers of the front, and is as noble as the Propyleum of Athens. There is a hall, library, breakfast-room, eating-room, all *chefs-*

d'œuvre of Adam, a gallery one hundred and thirty feet long, and a drawing-room worthy of Eve before the Fall. Mrs. Child's dressing-room is full of pictures, gold filigree, china, and japan. So is all the house; the chairs are taken from antique lyres, and make charming harmony; there are Salvators, Gaspar Poussins, and to a beautiful staircase, a ceiling by Rubens. Not to mention a kitchen-garden that costs 1400*l.* a-year, a menagerie full of birds that come from a thousand islands, which Mr. Banks has not yet discovered: and then, in the drawing-room I mentioned, there are door-cases, and a crimson and gold frieze, that I believe were borrowed from the Palace of the Sun; and then the Park is—the ugliest spot of ground in the universe—and so I returned comforted to Strawberry. You shall see these wonders the first time you come to Twickenham.

I hope you are heartily provoked at the new Voyages, which might make one a good first mate, but tell one nothing at all. Dr. Hawkesworth is still more provoking. An old black gentlewoman of forty carries Captain Wallis across a river, when he was too weak to walk, and the man represents them as a new edition of Dido and Æneas. Indeed, Dido the new does not even borrow the obscurity of a cave when she treats the travellers with the rites of Love, as practised in Otaheite.

I came to town to-day again to see relations and lawyers, and find nothing else left. All England is gone to meet King George at Portsmouth. The Du-

chess of Northumberland gives forty guineas for a bed, and must take her chambermaid into it. I did not think she would pay so dear for *such* company. His Majesty, because the post-chaises of gods are as immortal as their persons, would not suffer a second chaise to be sent for him, and therefore, if his could and did break down, he would enter Portsmouth in triumph in a hack. Lord Robert Bertie meets him at Petersfield, and then *curru portatur eodem;* so every body will know exactly all the celestial conversation on the rest of the road.

Lord Shelburne, who apprehends the car of administration to be more brittle just at present than that of Neptune, has adopted the regulation bill; and they say made a good figure on it. The games on the Ocean do not finish till Friday.

I know nothing of the baptism of my royal nieceling, but that her name is to be neither Neptune nor Amphitrite. The former was invited, but would not bestow a drop of cerulean water; so no message went any farther. I tell a lie; one is gone to Zell; but as the lady at Zell is a Nereid, I don't know whether she can dispose of a tea-cup of element without a patent under the trident: and therefore, I see no gossips to be had, but brother Pluto and sister Proserpine. I beg pardon for troubling your ladyship with the secrets of the deep, of which I know little more than the man that set the coral. My little bark neither

"Pursues the triumph nor partakes the gale."

My allegiance is confined to Ampthill, and I swear *by the cross* that, like the Jacobites of the last age, I am devoted to good Queen Anne, and am,

Your Majesty's true liegeman and cousin, H. W.

LETTER XXIII.

Strawberry Hill, June 26, 1773.

I BELIEVE I shall soon be a fitter correspondent for Lord Ossory than for your ladyship, for I can talk of nothing but sweepstakes and forfeits. Adieu, all my old system of knights, and giants, and fairies! If I write any more hieroglyphic tales, the scene will lie on Newmarket heath. I must turn Pegasus to grass and mount Alipes. In short, I have begun my whole education again. Mr. Burlton comes to me three times a-week to give me lectures on jockeyship; the other days I study conveyancing, mortgages, and annuities; and my head not happening to be very clear, I make sad jumbles, and confound jockeys and usurers, and t'other day asked my tutor when the match was to be run between Mr. Manners and Black-and-all-black. All this, however, is no joke: I am seriously ill with the fatigue I undergo; and the application I am forced to give to what I do not understand half turns my brain, and has brought back terrible headaches, to which I was formerly subject, but have not had these twenty years. If I had a moment's time, I would come and consult Lord Ossory, and must put a question or two to him at the end of this letter.

News it is impossible for me to send or know; I shall soon be as ignorant of everything but Westminster Hall as the Widow Blackacre.. Your own lord will tell you more of the Georgics at Portsmouth than I can, where his Majesty,

"Like Cimon triumphs over land and wave."

My own court goes to St. Leonard's Hill on Wednesday. The christening is to-night, and the new Christian is to be the Princess Sophia: the Queen of Denmark and the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland sponsors. The maternal relations are not to be present, for it would not be civil to kiss the lips of gossips, whose hands one has not kissed. I was very glad to have a few holidays here; nothing can reconcile me to royal courts, or courts of law. The season is divine, and Strawberry-hill greener than the Elysian fields. I have no objection but to so numerous a neighbourhood, which interferes with the repose I want so much.

Mrs. Meynel talks of calling on your ladyship on her way to Derbyshire. Lady Bridget enlivens Twickenham extremely. I cannot say that I am much struck with her wit, though she has certainly a great deal more than she can hold. I saw the Duchess of Queensbury last night; she was in a new pink lutestring, and looked more blooming than the maccaronesses. One should sooner take her for a young beauty of an old-fashioned century than for an antiquated goddess of this age—I mean by twilight. Adieu! madam. Enter Lord Ossory.

My dear lord, I must ask your counsel even about my own counsellors, and I will beg it by the return of the post. Brief, may I trust, Mr. B.? I am advised to let him sell Lord Orford's horses in this July meeting; and his mares, fillies, &c., in October. He says he must pay for their keeping. He did tell Lord O.'s solicitor that he reckoned the whole would fetch 4,000*l.* T'other day I got him to give me a rough sketch of the value of each, and it amounted in all but to 2,000*l.* This frightens me. I dare not beg you to take the trouble of talking to him, unless you should be there in July, and it came in naturally. He sold Stoic for 500 guineas, but with what he has paid, he makes a balance against us of near 300*l.* All this is so alarming, that I am afraid to go on. I dare not run risks either for Lord Orford or for myself. No soul will meddle but I; but, if I cannot trust the agents, I know no harm of Mr. B., but I do not know him. It will be the utmost kindness, and shall be an inviolable secret whatever you are so good as to say to me. The little strength I had is so shattered with the last gout, that I find this ocean of business overwhelms me. I venture my health to do my duty to this poor man, who has ruined himself, and is abandoned. His mother will not contribute a shilling — every body is plundering him. To take out the statute would throw away his places; and without it, what security have I? If the agents are not upright, dare I proceed! Should you see B. will you hint my difficulties! they are not sus-

picions, but common caution. Forgive me this liberty. I never wanted friendship more, for I never wanted courage so much. You have always been good to me, my dear lord; and Lady Ossory and you have perhaps spoiled me.

P.S.—I had sealed my letter, but am forced to open it, to beg the answer may be directed to London, as I shall be there.

LETTER XXIV.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 9, 1773.

HERE is a pause from my journeyings, madam. I returned yesterday from Park Place and Nuneham, and hope for a letter before I go to Houghton on Thursday se'nnight. Nuneham astonished me with the first *coup d'œil* of its ugliness, and the next day charmed me.

It is as rough as a bear, but capable of being made a most noble scene. There is a fine apartment, some few very good pictures, the part of a temple acted by a church, and a flower-garden that would keep all Maccarenia in nosegays. The comfort was a little damped by the constant presence of Sir William Lee and Dame Elizabeth his wife, with a prim Miss, whose lips were stuffed into her nostrils. They sat both upright like maccaws on their perches in a menagerie, and scarce said so much. I wanted to bid them *call a coach!* The morning and the evening

was the first day, and the morning and the evening was the second day, and still they were just in their places! I made a discovery that was more amusing: Lady Nuneham is a poetess, and writes with great ease and sense, and some poetry, but is as afraid of the character as if it was a sin to make verses. You will be more entertained with what I heard of Lord Edgcumbe. Stay, I dare not tell it your ladyship—well, Lord Ossory must read this paragraph. Every scrap of Latin Lord Edgcumbe heard at the Encœnia at Oxford, he translated ridiculously; one of the themes was *Ars Musica:* he Englished it, Bumfiddle.

I wish you joy, madam, of the sun's settling in England. Was ever such a southern day as this? My house is a bower of tuberoses, and all Twitnamshire is passing through my meadows to the races at Hampton Court. The picture is incredibly beautiful; but I must quit my joys for my sorrows. My poor Rosette is dying. She relapsed into her fits the last night of my stay at Nuneham, and has suffered exquisitely ever since. You may believe I have too; I have been out of bed twenty times every night, have had no sleep, and sat up with her till three this morning; but I am only making you laugh at me: I cannot help it—I think of nothing else. Without weaknesses I should not be I, and I may as well tell them as have them tell themselves.

P. S.—I am going to make a postscript of a very old riddle, but if you never saw it you will like it, and revere the riddle-maker, which was, I am told,

one Sir Isaac Newton, a great stargazer and conjurer:—

"Four people sat down at a table to play;
They play'd all that night, and some part of next day;
This one thing observ'd, that when they were seated,
Nobody played with them, and nobody betted;
Yet when they got up, each was winner a guinea;
Who tells me this riddle, I 'm sure is no ninny."

LETTER XXV.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 13, 1773.

I DO not care a straw, madam, for having heard the story of Mrs. Garnier and King Louis, before I received your letter. You told it so well, that it was new again; and I again doubt the truth, as I did at first. It would be marvellous indeed that a comely old monarch should be the first man to receive a refusal from a gentlewoman who never refused any man. I doubt whether my friend Mrs. Macaulay herself would be so anti-monarchical.

The history of Lady Mornington is much more credible. Where should bawds and bishops pay court but to youthful hypocrisy! Could her ladyship apprehend a cold reception where Lord Pembroke is a lord of the bedchamber? But how, madam, can you wonder that her story was no secret there? When was piety unread in the *Chronique scandaleuse?* There are none but the wicked that are not uncharitable, and that never trouble themselves about the sins of others.

I could not help saying thus much in answer to your ladyship's letter; but mine, I believe, will not set out immediately, I have so little to put into it. I have been two days in town, and heard not a syllable but the death of Lord Barrymore, who died of a fever in seven days, at Lady Grandison's. His little widow lies in, but will not follow him. His mother is the only person to be pitied.

George Selwyn was here this evening, which was a great compliment, as he left Lord March at Richmond ill of a bad sore throat, but mending. Our neighbourhood furnishes us as little as London. I saw Crauford in town, who takes the air, and talks of going to Scotland next week. He looks much the better for his gout, but will not allow it.

You don't flatter me, madam, by being more concerned for me than for Rosette. She is still alive, but I despair of her recovery. However, you have so little dogmanity, that I will say no more about her, nor about any thing else to-night, but his Grace of Devonshire, who seems to be buying the character of singularity very dear. May not his passion for antiques bring forth more dresses after old pictures?

17th.—It is in vain to wait for news; none will happen, and my letter must set out, so shall I next Friday, and probably be absent ten days. As the thunder has turned our glorious summer sour, I am the less concerned at going from home. From Houghton it will be impossible to tell your ladyship any thing, unless of the neighbouring court of Denmark.

When I was in town I sent again to Hamilton for your picture, and to Bonus for Barnaby Fitzpatrick's, but could obtain neither.

LETTER XXVI.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 1, 1773.

YOUR ladyship was particularly kind in letting me meet so agreeable a letter at my return, which made me for some minutes forget the load of business and mortification that I have brought from Houghton, where I was detained four days longer than I intended. You would I fear repent your love of details, were I to enter on particulars of all I have seen and heard! far worse than my worst apprehensions!

You know, madam, I do not want a sufficient stock of family pride, yet perhaps do not know, though I think it far from a beautiful place, how very fond I am of Houghton, as the object of my father's fondness. Judge then what I felt at finding it half a ruin, though the pictures, the glorious pictures, and furniture, are in general admirably well preserved. All the rest is destruction and desolation! The two great staircases exposed to all weathers, every room in the wings rotting with wet, the ceiling of the gallery in danger, the chancel of the church unroofed, the water-house built by Lord Pembroke tumbling down, the garden a common, the park half covered with nettles and weeds, the walls and pales in ruin, perpetuities of

livings at the very gates sold, the interest of Lynn gone, mortgages swallowing the estate, and a debt of above 40,000*l.* heaped on those of my father and brother. A crew of banditti were harboured in the house, stables, town, and every adjacent tenement; and I have but too great reason to say that the out-pensioners have committed as great spoil—much even since my nephew's misfortune. The high-treasurer who paid this waste and shared it, is a steward that can neither read nor write. This worthy prime-minister I am forced to keep from particular circumstances—I mean if I continue in office myself; but though I have already done something, and have reduced an annual charge of near 1,200*l.* a year, the consequences of which I believe were as much more, I mean the waste made and occasioned by bad servants, dogs and horses, still I very much doubt whether I must not resign, from causes not proper for a letter.

In the shock and vexation of such a scene was I forced to act as if my mind was not only perfectly at ease, but as if I, who never understood one useful thing in my days, was master of every country business, and qualified to be a surveyor-general. Though you would have pitied my sensations, you would have smiled, madam, I am sure, at my occupations, which lasted without interruption from nine every morning till twelve at night, except that a few times I stole from the steward and lawyer I carried with me, to peep at a room full of painters, who you and Lord

Ossory will like to hear, are making drawings from the whole collection, which Boydell is going to engrave. Well, the morning was spent in visiting the kennels, in giving away pointers, greyhounds, and foreign beasts, in writing down genealogies of horses—with all my heraldry I never thought to be the Anstis of Newmarket; in selling bullocks, sheep, Shetland horses, and all kind of stock; in hearing petitions and remonstrances of old servants, whom I pitied, though three were drunk by the time I had breakfasted; in listening to advice on raising leases, in ordering repairs, sending two teams to Lynn for tiles, in limiting expense of coals, candles, soap, brushes, &c., and in forty other such details.

About one or two, arrived farmers to haggle on leases, and though I did not understand one word in a score that they uttered, I was forced to keep them to dinner, and literally had three, four, and five to dine with me six days of the eight that I stayed there; nor was I quit so, for their business literally lasted most days till eight or nine at night. They are not laconic, nor I intelligent; and the stupidity and knavery of the steward did their utmost to perplex me and confound the map of the estate, every name in which he miscalled, as if he was interpreting to an Arabian ambassador. The three last hours of the night were employed in reducing and recording the transactions of the day, in looking over accounts and methodizing debts, demands, and in drawing plans of future conduct. Oh! I am weary even with the recollection

—is not your ladyship with the recapitulation? For the first four days I was amazed at the quickness of my own parts, and almost lamented that such talents had lain so long unemployed. I improved two leases 150*l.*, and thought I had raised another more; and let a farm which my lord kept in his own hands, and has received not a shilling from for seven years, for 500*l.* a year. Alas! I soon found I had been too obstinate or too sanguine, and absolutely had done nothing but blunder. My farmers broke off when I thought them ready to sign, and the second lease I found my lord had been overreached in, and had engaged for 400*l.*, though I was offered 600*l.* by two different persons. I came away chagrined and humbled.

As King Phiz says in the Rehearsal, if I am turned off, nobody will take me; I am glad therefore your ladyship did this time resist your propensity to praising me. I am glad to have done with my own chapter, and to come to your ladyship's entertaining letter—I should not say entertaining, as you have been a month in apprehensions of *you know not what*. I hope Lord Ossory will soon be without apprehension, and see *what* he wishes. Good madam, do not scamper about like some ladies of antiquity, I forget their country, who thought fatigue went half way in the procreation of a son and heir. I was not so much frightened at Mrs. Page's news; on the contrary, I was diverted, concluding the antiquated beauty was a lady famous for making ducal captives, and was going to be restored.

Lady Barrymore has, I think, two thousand a-year, and I believe will not break her little heart, as you may see I thought by this stanza to the tune of *Green grow the rushes, ho!*

O, my Lady Barrymore,
O, my Lady Barrymore,
If I was you,
I 'd bill and coo,
But I would never marry more.

I promise you I will not myself; nor do I think the lady in question will choose another Skeleton.

You guessed right, madam; *musicians* is the key to the riddle. If it is too easy, which I am bound not to think, as I could not guess it, remember Sir Isaac was more famous for solving problems than for wrapping them in obscurity.

I must beg not to have my details mentioned to the Grace of Courts, nor to your jockeyhood. I doubt they would neither touch the one nor reform the other, though such a theme for moralising. For my part, I sat down by the waters of Babylon, and wept over our Jerusalem—I might almost say, over my father's ashes, on whose grave-stone the rain pours!

Adieu! madam, the reading your letter over again made me cheerful. I shall want many such before the impression made by these last ten days will be obliterated.

LETTER XXVII.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 1, 1773.

I DO not agree with your ladyship that the Duchess of Kingston will have recourse to the protection of the King of Prussia. His Majesty has not shewn such partiality to Hymen as implies a propensity to bigamy. It might be charity to continue her maid of honour, after she was married and had two children, and was starving at Chudleigh House, like poor fat Mrs. Pritchard in "Jane Shore;" but every Court is neither so pious nor so gallant as to wear favours every time a virgin loses her vestality. I am charmed with what you say, *that much will be said that she does deserve,* and *more that she does not.* One may always venture to bet that the world's ill-nature will outgo anybody's ill deeds; and I am persuaded that Nero and Cæsar Borgia will, as well as Richard III., come out much better characters at the Day of Judgement, and that the *pious* and *grave* will be the chief losers at that solemnity. I have not yet heard the Duke and Duchess's will. She moved to town with the pace of an interment, and made as many halts between Bath and London as Queen Eleanor's corpse. I hope for mercy she will not send for me to write verses on all the crosses she shall erect where she and the horses stopped to weep; but I am in a panic, for I hear my poor lines at Ampthill are already in the papers. Her black crape veil, they say, contained a

thousand more yards than that of Mousseline la Serieuse, and at one of the inns where her grief baited, she was in too great an agony to descend at the door, and was slung into a bow-window, as Mark Antony was into Cleopatra's monument. I trust I shall learn more before this letter sets forth, but you will know all as soon as I shall, and as authentically. All my intelligence here arrives dislocated through dowager prisms, who pretend to see every thing in its true colours, and represent nothing as they received it. I always begin my answers the moment I receive your ladyship's, to keep up the conversation, but they often wait two or three days before they get their complement, and then I am ashamed of their scantiness, for the liberality of your pen scampers over a page of paper in a dozen lines, while my narrow-minded tool crams more words into a line.

Like your ladyship, I hear of nothing but matches, but, alas! all mine are at Newmarket. I never saw Lady Wrottesley's sister, much less do I know who her lover is. It is plain how old I grow, for I am quite ignorant of all that relates to the reigning and rising generation. I was shewed the other day a very long and bitter lampoon upon many nymphs and swains, now dancing on the present turf of Arcadia, and lo! I could not guess at half the names or characters; yet all the fashionable world are there. It seemed to me a satire on a boarding-school, written by a school-boy.

Mr. Browne's flippancy diverted me: it is what was

called wit two thousand years ago. There are twenty such pieces of impertinence recorded of the Grecian philosophers, and I shall wonder if this does not make its fortune. The moment a fashionable artist, singer, or actor is insolent, his success is sure. The first peer that experiences it, laughs to conceal his being angry at the freedom; the next flatters him for fear of being treated as familiarly; and ten more bear it because it is *so like Browne!*

George Onslow was here this morning, and told me the Parliament is not to meet till after Christmas; so Lord Ossory's cares will not be divided, madam, between the nation and your month. I beg you be very exact about your reckoning, and take the utmost care not to creep on into the new year; there will be nothing but girls in seventy-four. Lord Gowran's manhood depends upon his being born before the first of January, and till then you are sure of a son. I don't see why you should take the pains to have a child at all next year.

I must entreat you not to shorten your letters for want of matter. Am not I your Cicisbè established? Do you think those sentimental pairs in Italy who whisper from morning to night for forty years together, talk of nothing but their passion and news? Dear madam, depend upon it, in the intervals of love the Signora Antonia tells the Cavalier Giovanni Battista what she had for dinner, how she scolded her maid, and whether her husband allows her a *piccion grosso* every day or not. I never knew a fair one but poor

Lady Rochford who could talk about it and about it to all eternity. In short, every line from your ladyship's pen will be welcome; and the trifles I tell you prove how little I think of anything but amusing you. Good night!

LETTER XXVIII.

Saturday noon.

HYMEN, O Hymenæe! Well! I have got my budget full, and my letter shall set out incontinently. The post is come in and the mail is come in, and I shall decant all my news to my lord and our lady. The duchess is a miracle of moderation! She has only taken the whole real estate for her own life, and the personal estate for ever. Evelyn Meadows is totally disinherited. The whole real estate, after Andromache, the Duke gives to the next brother (who took the Hermione), and in failure of his heirs to his three brothers in succession; and, in default of issue thence, to the Duke of Newcastle's second son, Lord Thomas Clinton. Wortley Montague gets an estate of 1200*l.* a-year that was settled on him. There are small legacies to the amount of 1200*l.*, and Mr. Brand is not mentioned. Still the most curious part I am yet to learn; my letters do not tell me by what *style*, as the heralds call it, he has proclaimed his heiress.

The next scene lies in Calais. You shall have the identic words of my Lady Fenouilhet's letter:—

"I must acquaint you with a piece of insolence

done to the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland. Their Royal Highnesses, upon their arrival here on Saturday se'nnight, went to the play, as likewise on Sunday. On Monday morning two of the players waited on their Royal Highnesses to thank them for the honour that had been done them, and to receive the gratification usual upon such occasions. The duke gave them three guineas for the two representations, which was so far from satisfying these gentry, that, by way of impertinence, they sent their candle-snuffer, a dirty fellow, to present a bouquet to the duchess, who was rewarded for his impudence with a volley of *coups de baton.* This chastisement did not intimidate the actors, who sent one of their troop after the duke to St. Omer, with a letter, to know if it was really true his Royal Highness gave but three guineas, for that they, the players, suspected their companions had pocketed the best part of what was given. What answer the Duke gave I know not, but the man who went with the letter has been put in prison, and the whole troop has been ordered to leave the town—'*voilà qui est bien tragique pour les comediens.*' This affair is as much talked on at Calais as if it was an affair of state."

Well, madam, by their debût I think this "*cour ambulante ne laissera pas de rejouir l'Europe.*" Oh! I forget, I ought to be highly offended; but, I don't know how it is, my royal blood does not always take fire immediately.

LETTER XXIX.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 7, 1773.

I CANNOT yet tell you positively, madam, whether the Duke of Kingston has indited the duchess by all her alias's or not. I believed so, positively, for two days; but I heard to-night, that the will was made before they were married. I will not swear to this, nor to what I heard farther, that her first husband has been seen coming out of her house since she arrived.—I do not mean his ghost, for the first husband is not dead, though the second is. I hope it is true, and that Augustus Hervey will be as like Cato as two peas, and take his Portia again after the loan of her.

I have now learned that Miss Courtney's lover is my niece's brother-in-law, and am just as indifferent about their history as I was before. Since I am answering your ladyship's last letter again, I must tell you that I have recollected a passage in Madame de Sevigné exactly applicable to Browne's impertinence to the Duke of Marlborough, and still more just. An upstart gentleman playing at picquet with the Marshal de Grammont, and being very flippant, the marshal said to him, "*Monsieur, gardez ces familiarités là pour quand vous jouerez avec le Roi*"—and yet, that Mr. Browne was not the king's play-fellow.

In lieu of novelties, you must be contented to-day with an account of a dinner, that at least to me was new indeed. Lady Shelburne had engaged me to meet Lady Bingham on Monday. When I arrived, what

company do you think I found?—fourteen: herself, her second son, two nieces, Lady Bingham and her niece, Townshend the Lord Mayor and his wife, Mr. Deputy Paterson and his, Adair the surgeon, a Mr. Kelly, and a Dr. Bruce, a parson with whom I once had a great quarrel. I cannot say I was sorry, for two of the personages are famous in their generation, and I never had seen them before, Adair and Townshend. I cannot say I was much prejudiced in favour of the latter, nor made any acquaintance with him, though the countess presented us to each other. I fear I did not even drink the city's health to him as every body else did. His wife, a bouncing dame, with a coalblack wig, and a face coal red, called him my lord at every word, and our hostess much'd him as Mrs. Quickly does Falstaff; but I can tell you something more fashionable than these cits. Count Walderen is just returned from Petworth, where he saw Lord Egremont's new liveries; the postilions have white jackets trimmed with muslin, and clean ones every two days. Who will be the first to refine on this delicacy, and give Brussels lace? I know one that will not; that is, I know but one young man who, without affecting wisdom, has no faults; who has all the passions of youth without its ridicules; who loves gaming without making or losing a fortune, and Newmarket without being a dupe or a sharper; who has good sense without vanity, and good nature without weakness; who can live with Maccaronies, and be in fashion without folly; and who does every thing right and proper so natu-

rally, that both the sensible part of the world and the absurd part always think he is just what he ought to be. If your ladyship thinks this character is flattered or exaggerated, depend upon it you will never guess whom I mean, and yet it would be wronging your penetration to say you have not discovered the person.*

Lady Bingham is, I assure you, another miracle. She began painting in miniature within these two years. I have this summer lent her several of my finest heads; in five days she copied them, and so amazingly well, that she has excelled a charming head of Lord Falkland by Hoskins. She allows me to point out her faults, and if her impetuosity will allow her patience to reflect and study, she will certainly very soon equal anything that ever was done in water-colours.

* Lord Ossory.—I believe the opinions of his contemporaries would have assented to the accurate justice of this character. The late Lord Fitzwilliam in a letter to Lord Holland after his death, says, "I certainly loved Ossory most kindly, from the first day I knew him (how long is that?) down to this lamented hour. A thousand amiable qualities endeared him to me, as to all others. Who could meet his cheerful good-humour, and not be pleased both with him and with himself? such was the charm of his presence." I may, perhaps, be pardoned for inserting here some lines upon his death, written at the time by my brother, (himself too early lost to us), then only seventeen years of age.

"Here then thy cares and generous labours end,
Friend to thy servant! father to thy friend!
How much, untaught, we gathered from thy speech
And learned from thee, who never seemed to teach;
Thy cheerful presence living did impart
To all around thee, something of thy heart;
And now thou 'rt gone, those days have left behind
To all who prized them, something of thy mind." L. S.—[*Ed.*]

They are amazingly bold, high-coloured and finished. She draws them herself; and so far from being assisted, no painter in England could execute them in half the time. It is still more surprising that she copies from oil full as well, and her only fault is, giving more strength than the originals have.

LETTER XXX.

October 9.

As I do not write my letters in a breath, feasts increase upon me. I have quitted the city for the clergy. Yesterday I dined at George Onslow's with the archbishop, the Dean of Westminster, a head of a college, two more divines, Lady North, and Madam the Metropolitan. Yesterday they all breakfasted here, and Lord North; I enthroned the primate in the purple chair from the Holbein room, and it will never be filled with a better prelate. I went with them and dined in Bushy Park, and played at loo till ten at night, and came home in a tempest. I hope Jupiter Pluvius has not been so constant at Ampthill: I think he ought to be engraved at the top of every map of England. Mrs. Onslow screamed at the likeness of your picture, and yet I am not satisfied with it.

The post is come in, and I have not had a line from your ladyship this week. I do not mention it to complain, but for fear it should proceed from any-out-of orderness.

LETTER XXXI.

Arlington Street, Oct. 26, 1773.

THE Pope gave a fellow, who pretended to know the art of making gold, a purse. Your ladyship has sent one to me, who, I assure you, have not that secret—*anzi*, I only know how to dissolve it, though not to the perfection of some of my contemporaries. I thank you for it, however, and contrary to custom, value the extrinsic, which is beautiful, and I believe copied from some pattern of Iris's. Thank Heaven, it is complete, and did not reman imperfect like a *Watergall*—I don't know if I spell well. I will try if fortune can be dazzled by it, though they say she is blind, the first time I play at loo, but I have left it off; the ladies are all Maccaronies, and game too deep for me. The last time I was in town, Lady Hertford wanted one, and I sat down to what they call *crowns*. I lost fifty-six guineas before I could say an Ave Maria.

I swear by all the Saints, that I have not the glimpse of an objection to Lord Ossory's going to Houghton, but an insurmountable one to his sojourning at the inn. Trust me, madam, he will be almost as poorly accommodated at the Mansion-house, except in beds; and unless he carries his *batterie de cuisine*, cook and camp equipage, I doubt he must eat the game raw. The Philistines have been there before him and devoured everything. I shall write incontinently to the housekeeper and order beds to be aired.

It is well I did not receive your commands yesterday: I should have sent an excuse. In short, I had resigned the seals—and did not shed tears. I am plagued out of my senses; cheated, thwarted, betrayed — a very minister in miniature. I plucked up spirit, threw up my office, and hugged myself with my *otium sine dignitate.* My brother has been very kind, and has softened me, and I must go on; but with so little prospect of doing any good, that without the vanity of a martyr, it will be impossible to persevere. I now conceive what I could scarce believe, that there were men capable of plundering Lisbon, while it lay in ruins and ashes. I am almost afraid of trusting Lord Ossory, as he calls himself Lord Orford's friend I am afraid he should steal a picture. Apropos, he will find but one young pointer there: two have been carried off in spite of my teeth, though I have gnashed them horribly. To Lord Ossory I am obliged for the first and only notice I have received yet, of the sale of my horses. I sent down the lawyer and the steward, and neither of them have deigned to send me a line. They mind me as little as if I was really Lord Orford. Seriously, unless there is an act of Parliament to make all first ministers absolute, there will be no going on. Lord Mansfield is very good, and I am sure would support my prerogative, but the forms of law are tedious: I want to have power of hanging and beheading every body that contradicts me on the spot.

Now I have vented my own cares, I can attend to your ladyship's. You need not press me to be violent

against the Irish tax — follow you to the Queen's county! why, I must cross the Channel if I have a mind to see a friend I have in the world, and I must carry them clothes too: they will not have a shirt left to their backs. Pray write me all Lord Ossory hears thence. I shall be at Strawberry, and know nothing. Cannot you raise a rebellion? There is a very pretty precedent that I read in the papers this morning from Palermo. They make nothing in Spain and Sicily of shipping off a Viceroy or Secretary of state. Cannot you order a band of O'Bloods to tie Lord Harcourt hand and foot, and send him directed to St. James's? I will be ready at a minute's warning to put on King Francis's armour, and make a diversion in your favour.

Where are Charles Fox, and Mr. Fitzpatrick with the forlorn hope? Come, bustle, bustle, as my friend King Richard says; never despair, you fight for your household gods—they are mercenary folks, and never stay where there is no house.

As to Miss Pelham, she will have neither house nor Lares left. The latter can never believe a syllable she says. It is well our gods are only made of bread, and I wish she may have a *manchet* of them to eat! Poor soul, I heartily pity her, for she is quite mad!

I do not know a tea-spoon full of news. I dined and passed the evening of Saturday with the Hertford party at Sion — not at the great Sion, but at Lady Holderness's. I could tell you what was trumps,

but that was all I heard. In truth, I know nothing, think of nothing but my poor nephew's affairs and Rosette. I left her this morning so ill and weak, that I shall not be surprised, though shocked, if I find her dead. Margaret sat up with her the whole night before last; I have sat up half the night many times and raised all the family. Well! there ends the last of my favourites! I cannot get rid of nepotism, but at least Pope Horace will govern by himself.

LETTER XXXII.

Arlington Street, Nov. 18, 1773.

I DO not know, madam, whether my satisfaction has not overflowed a little too soon. The fate of the tax is *tant soit peu* more uncertain than I thought it, though still not expected to pass in Ireland. I hate to send you false news, therefore you must hear my authority. Lady Hertford told me on Sunday night with great pleasure, that the Duchess of Bedford had assured her it was given up; and the next morning I heard so as positively from others. It is still believed that instructions for damping it have been sent to Dublin. Mr. Fortescue Clermont, the intended mover, declares he finds it unpopular, and will not propose it. Commentators say he has been prevailed on to drop it. However, an account is come that Colonel Blaquiere, who, contrary to usage, has opened the budget instead of the Attorney-General,

has mentioned a Tax on Absentees among the possible ways and means of replenishing the National Purse.* This is not imputed to that first Minister's address. He has talked of a Tontine, too, still more

* The following Letters to Lord Ossory give an interesting account of the steps taken to prevent the imposition of a tax on Absentees, and demonstrate its absurdities.—Ed.

My Lord,

It is publicly reported that a project has been communicated to the King's Ministers for proposing in the Parliament of Ireland a tax of regulation which is partially and exclusively to affect the property of those of his Majesty's subjects who possess lands in that kingdom, but whose ordinary residence is in this. It is in the same manner publicly understood, that this extraordinary design has been encouraged by an assurance from Administration that if the heads of a bill proposing such a tax should be transmitted from Ireland, they would be returned with the sanction of his Majesty's Privy Council here under the great seal of England.

My lord, we find ourselves comprehended under the description of those who are to be objects of this unprecedented imposition. We possess considerable landed property in both kingdoms. Our ordinary residence is in England. We have not hitherto considered such residence as an act of delinquency to be punished, or as a political evil to be corrected by the penal operation of a partial tax. We have had, many of us, our birth and our earliest habits in this kingdom; some of us have an indispensable duty, and all of us, where such duty does not require such restriction, have the right of free subjects, of choosing our habitation in whatever part of his Majesty's dominions we shall esteem most convenient.

We cannot hear, without astonishment, of a scheme by which we are to be stigmatized by what is in effect *a fine* for our abode in this country, the principal member of the British empire, and the residence of our common sovereign.

We have ever shewn the utmost readiness in contributing, with the rest of our fellow-subjects, in any legal and equal method to the exigencies of the public service, and to the support of his Majesty's government.

We have ever borne a cordial, though not an exclusive regard, to the true interest of Ireland, and to all its rights and liberties; to none of

likely to be obnoxious than the tax, as it must be provided for by a permanent revenue, a measure that would annihilate the necessity of Parliaments. This is the totality of my intelligence, collected solely for

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which we think our residence in Great Britain to be in the least prejudicial, but rather the means, in very many cases, of affording them a timely and effectual support.

We cannot avoid considering this scheme as in the highest degree injurious to the welfare of that kingdom as well as of this. Its manifest tendency is to lessen the value of all landed property there, to put restrictions upon it unknown in any part of the British dominions, and as far as we can find without parallel in any civilized country. It leads directly to a separation of these kingdoms in interest and affection, contrary to the standing policy of our ancestors, which has been at every period, and particularly at the glorious Revolution, inseparably to connect them by every tie both of affection and interest.

We apply to your lordship in particular. This is intended as a mode of public supply, and as we conceive the Treasury of Ireland, as well as that of England, is in a great measure within your lordship's particular department, we flatter ourselves that we shall not be refused authentic information concerning a matter in which we are so nearly concerned, that if the scheme which we state to your lordship doth exist we may be enabled to pursue every legal method of opposition to a project in every light so unjust and impolitic.

Grosvenor Square, three o'clock p.m. Oct. 13, 1773.

My dear Lord,

Upon the best information I can get, I am more and more confirmed that Lord North, &c., have given such encouragement to the measure of the tax on Absentees from Ireland, that it undoubtedly will pass there, and very probably will be rejected by the Privy Council here.

It occurred to every one of us here, that some message might very properly be carried to Lord North: in the first place to know whether such a proposition had been made to his lordship, and whether he had encouraged it by *saying*, that *if it passed in Ireland* he should be for it in council, &c. The wording of the message must be well considered, and the persons who carry it should have weight. I am fully persuaded that if your lordship would be one, your presence would be of real consequence. In this matter I shall wish to act so as to avoid any imputation of making this matter a mere engine of opposition. The

the information of your Treasury. I have nothing of so small moment as the public to think of: nor did Irish politics ever before come under the meridian of mine; but I have been such a harlequin,

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concerns of so many are interested,—of very different political general ideas,—that I think the only rule for conduct should be what is equally right for all.

The particular view I have in wishing a message to be respectably carried to Lord North, is both to ascertain *who* it is will avow the advice, and, also, that Lord North may be apprized that the tax will be opposed by every legal and constitutional method.

The early apprizing of Lord North at this time will have one great consequence, as it affords him the opportunity of directing the King's servants in Ireland, that they should divide this tax from the General Supply Bill. Your lordship will easily foresee that if this measure comes to be opposed in the Privy Council here, they will lay great stress on the confusion which will arise in Ireland, if the General Supply Bill is sent back to Ireland with this tax rejected. It will be said that it must pass without alteration, as otherwise the Irish Parliament will not pass the General Supply Bill.

My opinion is really so clear in this matter, that though I ought to make many apologies to your lordship for writing to you on this subject, and for venturing to press your lordship to come immediately to London, yet I cannot refrain from troubling you on the occasion.

I hope you will receive this express this evening, and I shall be happy to see your lordship to-morrow, and to discuss more fully all the arguments which may occur.

I cannot conclude without expressing my real concern that the joy and happiness you lately felt was of so short duration.*

I have the honour to be, with great truth and regard, your lordship's most obedient and humble servant,

To Lord Ossory. ROCKINGHAM.

Grosvenor Square, near nine o'clock, Oct. 14, 1773.

MY DEAR LORD,

I HAD the honour to receive your lordship's obliging letter just as I was sitting down to dinner, and as I wished to give your lordship every information in my power, I have been obliged to delay writing for some hours, that I might do it more fully.

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* The loss of an infant son.

and changed my habit so often of late, that it would scarce be wonderful, if I were to turn White-boy.

I am so cowed by having given you unauthentic history, that I must protest devoutly I do not affirm

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Upon fuller consideration yesterday evening, some doubts rose whether the mode of a *personal* application to Lord North was the most eligible. The opinion seemed to preponderate that the safest way would be by *writing a letter*, because no misunderstanding or misrepresentation could ensue, and accordingly a draft of a letter has been drawn up, which is thought would answer the purposes. A doubt still remains whether the letter should be signed by as many as may approve it, or whether it should be remodelled into a letter and be signed by one, or any other person, who is concerned. Lord Hertford confines himself to declaring that he shall oppose the measure in the Privy Council; that he will talk to Lord North on the subject, but he says from *his situation* it would be improper for him to be in any other shape concerned.

Lord Shelburn seems to prefer an immediate representation to his Majesty in his closet, in which opinion I confess I do not join, as I rather consider that measure as the *dernier* not the primary resort.

The letter I have already written to your lordship would fully explain the object I have in wishing an early apprizing of Lord North, and your lordship would see that the liberty I took in pressing you to come, was, as much as possible, to avoid in the outset the imputation of party, &c.

The Duke of Devonshire, Lord Besborough, and Lord Milton are in London: I believe Lord Donegal is also in London. At this time very few, comparatively, are here, but the misfortune is, that the chief object in sending or writing to Lord North is lost, if many days' delay occur.

I must beg leave to observe to your lordship that I write to you with the fullest confidence indeed in this matter. Where it is necessary to give your lordship information, not only of my own thoughts, but of that of others, your lordship will feel the delicacy of the business.

I enclose to your lordship the sketch of a general letter. If it tallies in mode and in matter with your lordship's sentiments, I am fully convinced your signing it along with others would have great effect. I hope Lady Ossory is so well that your lordship may be able, at all events, to come to London to-morrow morning; I shall be happy to have the opportunity of fully conversing with your lordship on this very important subject.

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one syllable of what I am going to tell you. I know nothing of the following legend, but from that old maid, Common Fame, who outlies the newspapers. You have read in Fielding's Chronicle the tale of the

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I rely so much upon the pleasure of seeing your lordship, that I can hardly bear to suggest, that if you cannot come, I must beg to have the enclosed sketch returned by a messenger.

I have the honour to be, with great truth and regard, my dear lord, your lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

ROCKINGHAM.

Grosvenor Square, Saturday night, Oct. 23, 1773.

MY DEAR LORD,

AN express overtook me this morning at Hockerill: it had gone to Newmarket in the night. Lord North has now sent an answer, which indeed, *avows* the measure as *intended*, though from the wording of his letter, he gilds the pill with the plausible pretence that the *object being* to restore *the credit* of the finances, &c., in Ireland, he and others had expressed their readiness to adopt and concur in it.

Your lordship saw his first letter, wherein he puts it off *personally* from himself, though from his *deportment* he is most particularly concerned. His second letter is better covered, but I think it will be necessary that we should make a short reply, and that we should then proceed to send information of all that has passed to every person in England, whose property or interests are concerned.

The Duke of Devonshire is going out of town this morning. Lord Milton is in the country, and Lord Besborough is at Roehampton. It will take some time to get forward in this business, but I hope in the course of the week, the matters may be so far prepared, that if approved, they may be carried into execution. I see no difficulties, but what arise from the distance *we* are all at.

I shall see Lord Besborough to-morrow or early on Monday. I shall trouble your lordship with another letter, early next week.

I am ever, my dear lord, with great truth and regard, your lordship's most obedient and most humble servant. ROCKINGHAM.

I long to hear whether you have received any answer to your letter from Staffordshire; I mean such as you may think yourself at liberty to *communicate*.

The expression in Lord North's letter *by those of his Majesty's servants*

Hon. Mrs. Grieve; but could you have believed that Charles Fox could have been in the list of her dupes? Well, he was. She promised him a Miss Phipps, a West Indian fortune of 150,000*l.* Sometimes she

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to whom this communication was made, confirms me, that some of your friends were totally unacquainted with this transaction.

Grosvenor Square, Tuesday evening, October 26, 1773.

My dear Lord,

After fully considering what would now be right to do, and as we are all at present so dispersed, I found that if another letter was to be written to Lord North, it would certainly be necessary that all should sign it, and it would therefore require so many expresses backwards and forwards, that great delay must necessarily ensue. The same difficulty occurred in regard to the circular-letters, which would be necessary to send along with copies of what has passed when they were to be communicated to the various persons concerned, in every part of England. Near one hundred copies must be sent, and if the circular-letter to each was to be signed by *all us five,* it would naturally occasion many delays. I therefore now enclose to your lordship, a letter which I would propose to send along with the copies of the letter to and from Lord North. If your lordship and the other lords approve it, I shall consider it as being sufficiently authorized, and each individual who receives it, will have no doubt that I am authorized, when I express it in my letter. I believe this mode will save a great deal of trouble. I may be *lashed* as a *meddler,* called *factious,* &c., but I shall retain in my own mind a full defence of my conduct, as I am fully satisfied that in this measure I am acting as becomes any man who has either a regard for England, or Ireland, and as one, who, while the appearance of a free constitution exists in this country, will fairly and openly resist every attack that is made upon it. I hope your lordship will approve the wording of the circular-letter. I send this evening an express to the Duke of Devonshire, who is now at Woburn, and one to Lord Milton, in Dorsetshire. I trust I shall have their answers and approbation by Thursday evening, so that I may dispatch the hundred letters by Friday night or Saturday. I may then call at Newmarket on Monday, and make a short excursion to Wentworth, and be back in London by the middle of November.

I hear the public begin to talk upon this measure, and I am well informed that it meets with most general disapprobation. I hear also from Ireland, that many there much disapprove it.

was not landed, sometimes had the small pox. In the meantime, Miss Phipps did not like a black man; Celadon must powder his eyebrows. He did, and cleaned himself. A thousand Jews thought he was

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I am ever, my dear lord, with great truth and regard, your lordship's most obedient and affectionate humble servant, ROCKINGHAM.

MY DEAR LORD, Mistley, Nov. 19, 1773.

I LEFT London last Sunday, when I understood from all quarters that the Absentee Tax was not likely to pass the House of Commons of Ireland, and most probably would not now be proposed, for Fortescue, Clement's brother, who had undertaken to propose it, grew alarmed as he found it grew unpopular, and was drawing in his horns.

Since I came hither, I have received several letters from Dublin, one of which enclosed the newspaper I sent you, and referred me to it for the Secretary's speech, which my correspondent says contains the substance of what he said. You will therein read his sentiments on the Absentee Tax. Since that paper was printed, they have had a long debate, till midnight, and a division, in a motion made by Fitzgibbon, "That the distresses of this country require that a great Retrenchment should be made in the expenses of this Establishment." It was a well-fought debate: the members for the motion 88, against 112: a very full house. How the Castle will manage when in a Committee of Supply the new taxes are to be voted, God knows.

I wish I had been half an hour earlier at Ampthill, the day you left it. I am a great enemy to the Absentee Tax, because it affects and oppresses individuals, many of whom are my friends, but I think I could have shewn you, that an English Minister run no great risk in giving way to what the Parliament of Ireland proposed for the benefit of their own country, notwithstanding the blustering of a few individuals who were themselves principally concerned in the consequences attending such a measure.

I beg my compliments to Lady Ossory, who I hope is quite recovered.

I am, my dear lord, your very faithful and obedient humble servant, RICHARD RIGBY.

Grosvenor Square, Tuesday night, Nov. 23, 1773.

MY DEAR LORD,

THE accounts I received from London, and the accounts I received from Ireland *till* the middle of last week, almost made me believe that

gone to Kingsgate to settle the payment of his debts. Oh, no! he was to meet Celia at Margate. To confirm the truth, the Hon. Mrs. Grieve advanced part of the fortune — some authors say an hundred and

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the project of the tax on Absentees was nearly laid aside, or that there was a chance that we might have no further trouble on that business. I am not now of that opinion. Mr. Secretary Blaquiere, acting as Secretary of State in Ireland, on the 8th of this month took occasion on opening the budget *to mention* the Tax on Absentees, and *one* of the accounts I received says, that he declared it was the tax *he* had *a predilection* for, and that he hoped it would meet with a *candid* discussion. Another account says merely that Mr. Blaquiere mentioned it as a matter to be discussed; but the writer adds, *Now I plainly see that Government* MEAN TO SUPPORT THIS MEASURE.

Before I received this information at Wentworth I had prepared a sketch of a letter to communicate to your lordship and the other lords, that if it was approved, it might be sent to all the persons who in our former *circular-letter* we had informed that a meeting might possibly be necessary about the *middle of this month.* In that sketch I had said that *from circumstances* an immediate meeting did not seem necessary, but that if any thing material happened they might depend upon our attention, and that we would immediately apprize them, but at present would not give them a trouble which perhaps might be unnecessary. Something of the kind, at all events, ought to be done, or otherwise they may think we are neglectful, but whether absolutely to call a meeting directly or not, is matter of consideration. I have received very many answers to the circular-letter: all in general, except two or three, express much approbation of what we have done, and desire me so to inform your lordship, &c. They express a desire of being early informed, and declare their readiness to cooperate with us in what may be deemed right and proper on the occasion. I much wish, therefore, that your lordship would come to London that we may talk over this matter. The Duke of Devonshire will be in town Wednesday (*i. e.* to-morrow), or on Thursday.

I was in hopes to have heard from your lordship. Possibly you may not have had the opportunity of a full discourse on the subject. Blaquiere's naming this tax is a step beyond Lord North's letter. If you look to the letter you will see Lord North says, a plan was sent over; and then adds, that at the same time it was suggested that such a *tax would be proposed.* This certainly meant to convey that the tax would not *be*

sixty, others three hundred pounds—but how was this to answer to the matron?—why by Mr. Fox's chariot being seen at her door. Her other dupes could not doubt of her noblesse or interest, when the hopes of

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proposed by Government in Ireland. Nevertheless, Government in Ireland, you see, at least now appear to be desirous of its being proposed, and Mr. Blaquiere calls for it. Perhaps I am too suspicious; but I own I think, that there is a private and secret determination somewhere *at home* that this project shall be pressed forward.

I am ever, my dear lord, your lordship's most obedient and most humble servant, ROCKINGHAM.

I had an answer from Lord Weymouth. He declares strongly against the tax, but declines coming to any meeting; and says, that if it come before an *assembly* where he has a vote he shall be against the tax.

Grosvenor Square, Wednesday night, Dec. 1, 1773.

MY DEAR LORD,

THE circular-letter was prepared, and copies made, &c., and I shall send them, *though* with an addition of a postscript, which if you have not heard the news will surprise you. A motion was made in the *House of Commons* in Ireland, by Mr. O'Neil, *that the Committee of Ways and Means should be directed to sit again, and to reconsider the Absentee Tax.* The house was thin; the motion assented to. Monday last was the day appointed, so that in a few days we shall have the event.

I think it is impossible that the Castle in Ireland can join or can have been the promoters of this measure. If after all that has passed the Absentee Tax Bill should come over, I am sure it will behove us to be alert. I think we have gained infinite advantage by the *first* event of the motion for the tax being rejected in the Committee of Ways and Means, and being known here, and the *conversations* public have happened thereon. The general satisfaction, which has been expressed *among the Ministers*, will make it awkward, nay, impossible to retract. Indeed, I trust and believe that the reserve they before had was merely *discretion*, and that at the bottom their resolutions were *firmly taken* to resist the measure if it came over.

Do excuse me sending you such a blotted letter, but in fact I am rather hurried with various business, and neither my head, nor my old stomach complaint, are quite well to-night.

I am, ever, my dear lord, your most obedient and most affectionate, humble servant, ROCKINGHAM.

Britain frequented her house. In short, Mrs. Grieve's parts are in universal admiration, whatever Charles's are.

I went last night to see Mrs. Hartley. She is beautiful indeed, but has not quite so much sense in her

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Grosvenor Square, Friday evening,
near eight o'clock, Dec. 3, 1773.

MY DEAR LORD,

I HAVE received an account that the attempt to revive the consideration of the Absentee Tax has failed. It was rejected, and, as I imagine, from the unparliamentary mode of the proceeding. It was rejected without a division. I have received by this mail several letters from Ireland. If you had been in town I could much have wished to have had some conversation with you on the contents of those letters. Mr. Oliver, I hear, declared he should move this tax again in a future session.

I enclose to you a copy of the circular-letter which I am sending off to-night. I wrote to you on Wednesday night on the news of the fresh attempt—I hope you received that letter. I trust everything we have done has been well and properly done, and that you are perfectly satisfied with my conduct.

I am ever, my dear Lord, with the greatest truth and regard, your lordship's most obedient and most affectionate humble servant,

ROCKINGHAM.

The account came about two o'clock. I was in hopes of a letter from you by the post.

ABSTRACT FROM LORD NORTH'S SECOND LETTER, OCT. 21, 1773, TO THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

IN the course of the summer the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland sent over several propositions for restoring the credit, providing for the debts, and putting upon a proper footing the finances of that kingdom. At the same time he informed his Majesty's servants here that he had reason to believe that among other modes of supply there would probably be proposed a tax of the nature mentioned in your Grace's letter.

The answer which we returned to his Excellency by those of his Majesty's servants to whom this communication was made was to the following effect: That if the Irish Parliament should send over to England such a plan as should appear well calculated to give effectual relief to Ireland in its present distress, their opinion would be that it ought to be carried into execution, although the Tax upon Absentees should make a part of it.

countenance as Mrs. Grieve, and I think will never be half so good an actress. You will be sick of the sight of my letters. I will not even tell you if the Tax is thrown out.

LETTER XXXIII.

Sunday Night, Nov. 28, 1773.

We are told that he that runs may read. It would not do me, who cannot run, much good, if it were said that he that runs may write—and yet, unless I could write so little at my ease, it would be difficult to find time, as our lord will tell your ladyship, who found me up to the chin in papers. You, perhaps, think I find too much time to write to you, especially when it is so unnecessary, as he is in town, and I have told him all the news I know, and he may have picked up ten times more. I write for that very reason. It at least shews I think of you, when you are thinking of another, and when I know another's letters will be more welcome than mine. There is, besides, more merit in writing when one has nothing to say, which everybody else makes an excuse for not writing. There is again more merit in writing when one has other business; other folks pretend it, when they have none: in short, if I must write twenty letters on disagreeable affairs, I will write one for pleasure, and about nothing.

I have talked Lord Ossory to death, for my mind runs over, and I have not a drawer in my head that

will hold any more. I have lost my memory too, for being obliged to empty my brain and new furnish it, I have mislaid the inventory, my recollection, and know not where to look for anything. My soul is a perfect chaos; and Governor Pownall who came this morning to tune my spheres, snapped several of the wires, and I write to beg that you would send me some notes to restore me to harmony with myself.

Our lord will tell you about the Opera, and the Absentee Tax, and Charles Fox's debts, and Lord Holland, and Lady Bridget's match with Mr. Tall-Match, and the Duke of Leinster's will, and Peter Oliver's miraculous picture, &c. &c. I only mention these articles to help your ladyship to catechise him. You are to adore a *bon mot* of Madame de Sevigné, and you are to know that because I have a great deal of idle time, I have undertaken to carry an election at Cambridge for Lord Sandwich. Nothing comes amiss to my universal capacity. In truth, I am in the meantime worn to a mere skeleton, as if a witch had rid me to the sabbat; I am nervous from head to foot; and shall be dead like harlequin's horse, when I am just arrived at the point of perfection. I will take care to let you know the moment I am dead, that you may not expect a letter, and may find a new gazetteer forthwith. I grudge nobody my places when I can enjoy them no longer; but Mr. Martin, who was a little too impatient last year. Now I think of him, I will take more care of myself.

I have not wished you joy, madam, of Lady Mary

Fox's* son: I told Lord Ossory I call it a Messiah come to foretel the ruin and dispersion of the *Jews;* but I doubt they will continue to drive the same trade they have done ever since they were chased out of the Temple; and that Charles Fox will not, like Titus, though the delight of mankind too, put them to the sword as they deserve. Pray take notice, madam, that if my letters are very frequent, they are at least not long.

LETTER XXXIV.

Arlington Street, Dec. 14, 1773.

PRAY, madam, where is the difference between London and the country, when every body is in the country and nobody in town? The houses do not marry, intrigue, talk politics, game, or fling themselves out of window. The streets do not all run to the alley, nor the squares mortgage themselves over head and ears. The play-houses do not pull themselves down; and all summer long, when nobody gets about them, they behave soberly and decently as any Christian in the parish of Marylebone. The English of this preface is, that I have not the Israelitish art of making bricks without straw. I cannot invent news when nobody commits it.

We have been at short allowance, and lived three weeks upon Charles Fox's debts, two marriages, and Lady Bridget's coupling. We are now picking a duel between a Mr. Temple and a Mr. Whateley, the latter

* The late Lord Holland.

of whom has been drilled with as many holes as Julius Cæsar or a cullender, and of which I know no more than the newspapers, who tell every thing I have told you. His Majesty, who though as talkative, is not quite so communicative, will not tell a soul, but *his friends*, who is to have the vacant garters and bishoprick; and all *his friends* will tell is, that Lord North's friend, Dr. Dampier, is not to have the latter; nay, nor Lord Mansfield's Dr. Hurd. For my part, I guess that Lord Barrington will have the riband, and General Harvey the mitre, or *vice versâ*, for I take it for an Opposition lie, that Madame Schwellenberg is to have a garter, and be declared Prime Minister, Lord Bute's panic after such a false step not being yet forgotten.

Tell me, of all loves, who is Mr. Hanbury and his play, and whether at Mr. Hanbury's play they have always two prologues to an epilogue, as Miss Chudleigh had two husbands. Oh! I mistake, I see it is two epilogues to a prologue, like my friend Mr. Burlton. I like the prologue; Mr. Cumberland's "Epilogue" is a very long riddle, which I guessed from the two first lines; the short wife is much prettier from not being so gossiping. There is an antique statue of Saturn going to eat Jupiter, which Guido imitated divinely in the "Simeon and Child," at Houghton, which I have mentioned in the Ædes Walpolianæ, and which I suppose the bard confounded. I will return these pieces, and send you my Sevigné, a new poem by Voltaire, in which there

is an admirable description of an army, and some very pretty lines by M. de Lisle, who was here with the Chatelets; but I must, yes, *must* have my Sevigné again, and La Tactique, or I will never lend you a tittle again.

Poor Miss P. *outgoes* her usual *outgoings*. She sits up all night at the club without a woman, loses hundreds every night and her temper, beats her head, and exposes herself before all the young men and the waiters; in short, is such an object that one cannot but be heartily sorry for. I am sorry too to say that the affair of Lord Carlisle's debt makes still more noise.

I dined and passed Saturday at Beauclerc's, with the Edgcumbes, the Garricks, and Dr. Goldsmith, and was most thoroughly tired, as I knew I should be, I who hate the playing off a butt. Goldsmith is a fool, the more wearing for having some sense. It was the night of a new comedy, called the School for Wives, which was exceedingly applauded, and which Charles Fox says is execrable. Garrick has at least the chief hand in it. I never saw anybody in a greater fidget, nor more vain when he returned, for he went to the play-house at half-an-hour after five, and we sat waiting for him till ten, when he was to act a speech in Cato with Goldsmith? that is, the latter sat in t'other's lap, covered with a cloak, and while Goldsmith spoke, Garrick's arms that embraced him, made foolish actions. How could one laugh when one had expected this for four hours?

Mrs. Fitzroy has got a seventh boy. Between her

and the queen, London will be like the senate of old Rome, an assembly of princes. In a few generations, there will be no joke in saying, *Their Highnesses the Mob.*

P.S. I send the packet to your porter, to be sent to you.

LETTER XXXV.

Strawberry Hill, Christmas night, 1773.

You must not expect, madam, not to be scolded, when you excuse yourself so well. You and the King of Prussia, and Major-General Xenophon, shine more by retreats after a defeat occasioned by your own faults, than others by victories. I am now doubly obliged to rate you, for you have made me your ghostly father, and confessed your sins of omission; indeed, we old directors are more tickled with details of those committed, and are so afraid the penitent should forget the minutest circumstance! This part of my office you tell me is to be a sinecure for the future; it is well I have so good an opinion of you, madam, or don't you think my imagination would help me a little, as well as you suppose it does in filling up your sentences?

Your reflection on Madame de Grignan's letter after her mother's death is just, tender, and admirable, and like the painter's * hiding Agamemnon's face, when he despaired of expressing the agony of

* Timanthes.

a parent. No, Madame de Sevigné could not have written a letter of grief, if her daughter had died first. Such delicacy in sentiment women only can feel. *We* can never attain that sensibility, which is at once refined and yet natural and easy, and which makes your sex write letters so much better than men ever did or can; and which if you will allow me to pun in Latin, though it seems your ladyship does not understand that language, I could lay down as an infallible truth in the words of my godfather,

"Pennis non homini datis,"

the English of which is "it was not given to *man* to write letters." For example, how tiresome are Corbinelli's letters, and how he wears out the *scelerat* and the jealousy!

The President Moulceau I doubt was not *de l'extrêmement bonne compagnie,* and only served as a *pis aller de Province,* or, as I rather guess, by Madame de Simiane, was a man whose interest and credit they made use of. The dates do not contradict one another, but the editors, from an unpardonable laziness, have not taken the pains to range them in order.

The address to kings is not Voltaire's. I thought I had said it was written by M. de Lisle, who was here with the Chatelets.

As I am here, and do not know when this letter will have got its cargo, I will not tell you, all I have yet to tell you, Miss Leveson's several legacies. It would, indeed, be sending coals to Newcastle, to acquaint you with the wills and testaments of your own relations. I

only mention the event to wish you joy of Miss Vernon having a remembrance.

Craufurd I have not yet seen; he called one day at past four o'clock. I am rejoiced he is better, and, indeed, concluded so; he oftenest calls on me when it is low water.

I have not a word more to say; and this being but a parcel of answers to questions, no matter when it sets out. As your confessor, I dispense with, nay, enjoin your breaking your last rash vow, of writing no more long letters; nay, you have not written a long one yet. The god of letter-writing does not, like the god of Chancery Lane, count by sheets of paper or parchment. If your ladyship's pen straddles, like the giant's boots, over seven leagues or pages at once, the packet is the heavier, but the letter has not a word the more in it. I am grateful for every syllable you do write, nay, am reasonable, and do not expect volumes from the country; but I cannot allow that a sheet and a half are longer than one sheet, when they hold no more. I speak from self-interest; I write so close that these two pages and a bit would make three sheets in your ladyship's hand; and then what apologies and promises I should have to make for the enormity of my letters. Well, this is not a reproof, but a mark of my attention to all you say and do; and how determined I am to bate nothing of the intrinsic. This has been a very barren half year. The next I hope will reinstate my letters in their proper character of newspapers.

LETTER XXXVI.

Arlington Street, 27th.

I HAVE seen Craufurd, who positively denies the accusation of being in health or spirits, which he protests he never was guilty of in his born days. He goes to-morrow to Althorp, and will call on you again as he goes or comes to or from Winterslow. I know nothing of any sort. If the town will not commit news, it is no fault of mine, nor can I help my letters being as barren as the Gazette.

LETTER XXXVII.

Arlington Street, Dec. 30, 1773.

I HAVE twenty letters to write, madam, but the first shall be to you, as it would have been, though I had not just received yours and the packet from the Duke of Dorset. Don't expect I should talk of plays; my heart is open to nothing but my own happiness and deliverance. I shall have time enough now soon to think of anything but myself; in short, by the most wonderful of all changes, my Lord Orford is come to his senses from the lowest ebb of misery and desperation. Now think what physicians—nay, what experience is! Dr. Battie and Dr. Jebb have been with me this morning, and, to their honour, frankly declare

that from total persuasion of his irrecoverability, they see great prospect of his being quite well. He talks and writes perfect sense. They have opened his past situation to him, and told him if he will keep himself cool and quiet for some time, not write, do business, nor see company, they think there is the fairest prospect of not falling back. He has promised all. Oh! madam, what a burthen does this take off my mind! I shall have no care but dread of a relapse; and may be so happy as once more to be the idlest and freest of human beings. All the world shall be rogues if they will, and it will be no business of mine to reform them. If an empire were laid at my feet, I should toss its sceptre out of the window, and Lord Weymouth or Lord Rockingham might pick it up if they pleased, or my senior Lord Guildford, who is a more rising man, and is just made Treasurer to the Queen. The town laughs, and says the reversion of that place is promised to Lord Bathurst.

I am very sorry to hear the play at Winterslow is put off, not for want of young or old comedians, but on the dangerous state of both Lord and Lady Holland. The former would be happy for him, the latter a sensible loss to all who know her. One of the actresses at Cashiobury, Lady Elizabeth Capel, they say, is to marry the new Lord Grimston. Garrick has brought out what he calls a Christmas tale, adorned with the most beautiful scenes, next to those in the opera at Paradise, designed by Loutherbourg. They have much ado to save the piece from

being sent to the devil. It is believed to be Garrick's own, and a new proof that it is possible to be the best actor and worst author in the world, as Shakspeare was just the contrary.

Have you read the character of Lord Chatham by Dr. Robertson in to-day's Public Advertiser? It is finely, very finely written. I do not quite subscribe to the solidity of his lordship's sense, or to the propriety of his means. He was a proper Prime Minister to Queen Fortune, who loves the bold, and favours those most who are for stretching her prerogative. Dr. Robertson, I should think, would not be appointed historiographer-royal soon.

The three Graces * leaving you! Bless me, madam, what will become of you! What an awkward dowdy will you grow! What would Juno do without her peacock! What a fine figure will you make in your chaise and pair of turtles, without the body-coach and maids of honour following! Lady Spenser could as soon keep up her drawing-room without Mrs. Howe and Miss Loyd. You are hiring the Virtues, I perceive, to replace your loss: you have taken Miss Resignation, Miss Friendship, and Miss Their-own-good, to repair the gap in your circle: to be sure they are three pretty wholesome girls, and when they are a little fashioned will do pretty well on your public days; but you can never produce such ungain country creatures in town. They will come with their Christian names

* The three Miss Vernons upon whom he had written a poem so entitled.—Ed.

embroidered in their arms in gunpowder, and ask blessing of you as their godmother when they are going to bed. Lord March will whisper them at the first public place, and George Selwyn will swear a child to him by the prettiest. It will not do, madam, it will not do: keep the Graces and the Duke of Dorset at Ampthill; assemble every thing that is agreeable round you, shine at the head of them, and do not imagine that your sisters will improve by being educated in London. Where, what will they see that are better models?

LETTER XXXVIII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 5, 1774.

THE physicians continue to flatter us with the fairest hopes of Lord Orford's recovery, yet I am far from seeing any solid ground to build on. He persists in only whispering, is impatient of all contradiction, cannot without authority be kept from wine, thinks of nothing but his dogs and horses, and the physicians themselves are afraid of telling him they are gone. My anxiety, instead of being lessened, is doubled. I dare not contradict the faculty, who, I fear, have been rash. I dread a relapse; I dread still more the consequences of a sudden release. The physicians have said he is so well, that all his acquaintance are pouring in upon him, and yet I am told I must keep him quiet and admit nobody. My whole time is em-

ployed in sending messages to his house; while every one gives me different advice, and expects I should attend to every contrariety; but though you are so very kind, madam, as to interest yourself in my perplexed and grievous situation, ought I to weary you with the circumstances? Any other subject is preferable; but I have no news, and if I spin out of my own bowels, what can I find there but the poison I have been swallowing these eight months?

The character of Lord Chatham was written by the Irish Mr. Flood, and published in Dublin a year ago in a book called Barataria. Indeed there was little probability of its being the work of Dr. Robertson: could so much truth come out of Nazareth?

The play at Cashiobury is much vaunted, both for acting and magnificence. Mr. Cradock, author of a bad tragedy called Zobeide, was introduced between the acts to repeat Gray's Eton Ode. It is a pity Sir Ralph Pain was not here to pronounce an oration of Demosthenes or Hurlothrumbo. I have seen the Christmas Tale: it is a due mixture of opera, tragedy, comedy, and pantomime, with beautiful scenes. This effort of genius is, among others, given to me:—one of the penalties one pays for having played the fool, is to be suspected of being a greater fool, and oftener than one is. Not that I complain, for I am a considerable gainer on the balance of false reputation. If the "School for Wives," and the "Christmas Tale," were laid to me, so was the Heroic Epistle. I could certainly have written the two former, but not the latter. Both

shew for what judges men become authors! I dare say the heroic bard is as much offended at being confounded with me, as I am with the others, and with more reason. Mediocrity is much nearer to the bottom than to the top; but here am I talking of common writers, when I can tell you of a noble one to be enrolled in my Catalogue. The present Lord Granby is an author, and has written a poem on Charity; and in prose a Modest Apology for Adultery. I am even assured they have been printed and published; I much doubt the latter, but have employed emissaries to find out the truth. They say, his lordship writes in concert with a very clever young man, whose name I have forgotten.

I condole for your loss of the Graces, and the breaking up of your Academy. Methinks I wish Lord Ossory would employ Sir Joshua on a large picture like Rubens in the Luxembourg. Lady Anne's education will certainly turn out better than that of Mary de' Medici. You must hold her in your lap: our lord, like Mercury, introduces the three Vernons, and with so much truth, you would not want allegory, which I do not love. You will stare at a strange notion of mine: if it appears even a mad one do not wonder. Had I children, my utmost endeavours should be to breed them musicians. Considering I have no ear, nor ever thought of music, the preference seems odd; and yet it is embraced on frequent reflection. In short, madam, as my aim would be to make them happy, I think it the most probable method. It is a resource will last their lives, unless

they grow deaf: it depends on themselves, not on others; always amuses and soothes, if not consoles; and of all fashionable pleasures is the cheapest. It is capable of fame, without the danger of criticism; is susceptible of enthusiasm, without being priest-ridden; and unlike other mortal passions, is sure of being gratified even in Heaven.

LETTER XXXIX.

Arlington Street, Jan. 19, 1774.

I WAS disappointed, madam, in not seeing Lord Ossory, who was promised to us on the birth-day. I hope there was no graver reason for his not coming, than not having a coat trimmed with Brussels-point, or buttons to his clothes, edged with fur, which our English travellers, who never see good company at Paris, are made to believe by their tailors, are French fashions, and which I, who did live in good company, never beheld there; nor indeed, anything in dress that was very absurd. Singularities grow here, and are not exotic. If French dragoons kill themselves, it is to be *à l'Angloise*. The most singular thing at present, is there being no news; not an event since the destruction at Winterslow,* where, I hear, that next day they drank to Ste. Fox's *fire-side*. Oh! yes,

* Winterslow House was burned to the ground. The mansion of Lord Holland.—ED.

there is a bit of news; General Græme has resigned his places about the Queen, and old Hermes of Salisbury, father of Harris at Berlin, is made Her Majesty's Secretary *à la* Guildford. I am glad to find that at my age, one may still be a rising young man, and succeed one's ancestors.

In Russia there is laid a great political egg—if it does but hatch. Nothing less than a revolt. An impostor has declared himself Peter III., and demands the crown for the Great Duke, his pretended son, who, he says, is kept down by an infamous regency. This man may be the Great Duke's father, but the Czarina took due care that he should not be *her* husband. However, he has defeated some of her troops, is marching to Moscow, and she dares not send away the recruits to the army. I heartily wish the Pretender success, and I should be glad to see revolutions, not only in Russia, but in Sweden, Prussia, and Austria.

My nephew continues mending, but I doubt his recovery cannot be depended upon. I would compound for his remaining as well as the Duchess of Queensberry, and such out-pensioners of Bedlam.

I am ashamed to send this scrap by itself, but what can I do? the secret of making events is lost. Nobody makes even a debate but the Duke of Richmond, and I know no more of Indian politics than I did of farming, a year ago. All the marriageable royal family is married, and the next generation of princes is not ripe. Pactolus is dry both in Bengal and at

Almack's: and even Juno, the Goddess of match-making, forbids the bans, instead of trying them. Pray therefore, madam, excuse my not knowing nothing. My pen has been listening all day for your service, but can tell you nothing newer than how much I am, &c.

LETTER XL.

Jan. 29. 1774.

You must excuse my silence, madam, which is not, nor can be forgetfulness. While Lord Ossory was in town, I knew you could not want letters. Since he went, I have not had an instant's time; and though I write now, instead of dining, I have not a tittle to tell you that can entertain you, unless you will allow yourself to be diverted with the confusion of a methodist, as I am, who hate those knaves. So does King George, who has ordered the pure, precise Dr. Dodd, to be struck off the list of his chaplains, not for gallantry with a magdalen, as you would expect, but for offering a thumping bribe to my Lord Chancellor for the fat living of St. George's. It is droll that a young comely divine should have fallen into the sin, not of Mary the Penitent, nor of her host, Simon the Pharisee, but of Simon Magus, the founder of Simony. Perhaps, as the doctor married Lord Sandwich's mistress, he had had enough of *des filles repenties.*

A parcel of Warwickshire colliers alarmed the Court

yesterday, and drew a great crowd round St. James's, but it was only a tribute to their Sovereign from their mines. I hope no wicked ballad-monger will ridicule the loyalty of those poor men, and paraphrase the ancient song of "Old King Cole," who called for his fiddlers three, and there was fiddle faddle and twice fiddle faddle, &c.

I ought to be in great spirits to-day, if I knew where to find them; but they have been so long sunk under troubles, I have so many still, and my nerves are so shattered, that I do not know how to be so happy as I ought to be, when I can say with truth that I do believe my nephew perfectly in his senses. He owns he thinks his disorder the greatest blessing of his life; that he is convinced all that has been done is right; that it is what he wished done, but could not undertake; and that he is determined to pursue the plan I have chalked out for him. You may judge, madam, how very kind I think this treatment, and how much I feel myself obliged to him. I am to see him to-morrow, and have such a confusion of sensations that I dread the moment, though it is so delicious. Nay, I tremble more than ever lest he should relapse; for now my tenderness is interested in his health, which is still warmer than compassion. Nor am I yet out of this, or twenty other labyrinths!—but I must hold my tongue and drink the cup in silence.

Our lord and I talked much on a subject, that is much at my heart, though my heart is so full. The outward and visible signs are very promising: other

prognostics are not so favourable. A deep silence is observed even on what every body else talks of—the late rupture. I sounded Lady P., who had not heard even of that; which confirms what I have told you, that *two persons* will not so much as mention anything that can lead to the subject. It was a curious scene on Wednesday night, when all the parties met at Lady Charlotte's; the rejected lover played at quinze with the Duchess: but what had happened and what I hope will happen, was not so well disguised by the rest of the young actors and actresses. I do not think any public decision will be taken soon; and I do not doubt but the interval will be employed to defeat it. Still I have nothing to judge by, but these observations, for if everything was settled, not a word the more would be said. For you know, madam, discretion is like the bird that hides its head, and fancies it is not seen; a remark that comforts us, the indiscreet, prodigiously. The language of art is just as well understood as that of frankness: nay, even its silence is talkative, that is, intelligible. Cunning does not make dupes half so often as it is itself the dupe of good-breeding. It would be illbred to tell people that one sees through them; and therefore they flatter themselves that they are not seen through—but all this is common-place, and I had better bid you adieu, madam, *en attendant notre parenté.*

LETTER XLI.

Feb. 12, 1774.

I MUST seem extremely culpable to your ladyship for not answering your very kind letter the instant I received it; but it has been absolutely impossible. Though I have given up my trust, I have had many things to settle before I was quite quit of it. I have been in arrears for visits, had neglected my own affairs, and have so many other duties and avocations that I have not a moment's leisure. I stayed at home this morning on purpose to write this and two other letters, but so many people have come in, that it is almost three, and I have only begun, as you see, madam. I am quite well again, and think myself the happiest being alive, with having got so fortunately, in spite of all my ignorance and incapacity, through my dismal business, and with seeing it at an end. I should, as I told you before, be in great spirits, if I knew where to find them; but my mind has been tormented and oppressed, my nerves are affected, and the impressions remain, though the cause is removed. I feel what is passed, and tremble lest it should return. In short, I sometimes think of going abroad, to vary the scene, recover my health, and avoid a relapse, for so Lord Orford's would be to me, unless I can decline the charge, as I am determined to do if I possibly can. I should not say so much on myself, were it not an excuse to Lady Anne, as well as to your ladyship;

but how write a proper letter to her, or defend myself from the accusation of wit, unless by proving how very dull I am! Oh! would I were capable of inventing stories of owls!

I am rejoiced Lord Ossory is coming, and overjoyed that there is a prospect of your both passing some time here. As he will not be with you when you receive this, I shall take the liberty of hinting at a little selfishness, that appears in your purloining *him* from the world, because *you* are determined to quarrel with it.

His acquiescence gives the *pas* to his virtues over yours, and you will not be the perfect wife, in my eyes, till you give up those of a shepherdess.

The accounts of Lady Holland are most cruel and melancholy. I have not yet been able to go to Holland house; partly from my disorder and business; still more from not having spirits to bear the sight. But I will gather resolution, and perhaps she will not see me.

I know not a syllable of news. There is some political, but I care not about it, nor would it entertain your ladyship. It relates to a quarrel between the Speaker and the Printer; and about Mr. Grenville's bill for elections.* One must be deep in politics to be amused with such points.

* The Grenville Act was made perpetual in this Session by 250 to 122. The disposition of the nation was so strong in favour of this bill, that very few who voted against it could venture to shew themselves at a general election. It has been repealed in our own times with almost as general approbation.—Ed.

The History of Charles Fox and Mrs. Grieve is published in very wretched verse, but curious for being authentic. There is a postscript too to the Heroic Epistle, with some excellent lines, but inferior to the first, as second parts generally are.

I have again been interrupted; it is four o'clock, and I am not dressed; but I need not apologise for concluding such a letter. I am worn out; and, next to being a man of business, I find the worst thing in the world is to be a decayed one.

LETTER XLII.

Feb. 19, 1774.

I WILL say no more, madam, on the subject of our last letters, for one reason that is worth all others. In one word, I leave that subject to your own reason, and I cannot trust it in better hands. You will do whatever is most proper, I am sure; all I presumed was to represent to you what I feared your own feelings might very naturally intercept; the only excuse for ever presuming to give advice.

Sensible people know all that can be said to them; at least, as well as their counsellers; but it is not always that they admit their own reason into the cabinet. It is only a disgraced minister to a dead king, that plagues the successor with repeated remonstrances. I have no such opinion of my own wisdom, and am always glad to give up my place,

and relapse into my own idleness. At present, I could tell you nothing but what Lord Ossory has brought you.

I saw him but one minute, which is not extraordinary, as the little time he passes in town cannot allow him leisure to sit with one that is out of the round of pleasure, and whose amusements even do not extend to politics or diversions. I am a little afraid that I shall not be here when you come yourself. I am to go either to-morrow se'nnight or to-morrow fortnight, with Lord Orford, to Houghton, a very unpleasant journey,—but I cannot decline it; nor would it become one that preaches to others to dispense with his own duty, which I have unluckily, though late, made my rule. You will smile, madam, at the word *unluckily*, but it is peculiarly so to me. I came into the world when all my contemporaries were wise young men, and hopeful senators. They had been bred at Leyden and Geneva, and it was a charm to behold such a promising generation! I only was a reprobate, and used to say and do whatever came into my head; I used to shock my Lord Hartington, and Lord Coke, and Lord Hilsborough, and Lord Barrington, and had more pleasure in George Selwyn's company, than in sucking wisdom at the feet of those Gamaliels, Mr. Pelham, and the sage Duke of Newcastle. In my latter days I have changed my system, and have taken into keeping, that old battered abandoned haradan, common sense — and still am in the wrong, and out of the fashion. If I went to Almack's

and decked out my wrinkles in pink and green, like Lord Harrington, I might still be in vogue; or if I paid nobody, and went drunk to bed every morning at six, I might expect to be called out of bed by two in the afternoon to save the nation, and govern the House of Lords by two or three sentences as profound and short as the Proverbs of Solomon. Well! I must dress and dine and go to the comedy of the Man of Business. As a proof of my incapacity, I read it this morning, and it is so full of modern lore, of rencounters and I know not what, that I scarce comprehended a syllable. No, I shall never be fit for anything as long as I live. A miscarriage I was born and shall die, without any merit but that of being

Your ladyship's most attached.

LETTER XLIII.

Strawberry Hill, April 6, 1774.

I LIKE to obey your ladyship in nothing so little as in talking of myself; and yet I must, as you inquire after *it;* and gratitude obliges me to thank you for so much goodness. I have been here these four days, have slept well, and have less pain in my breast, and fewer nerves. I am advised to go to Bath, which I will not do for the very reason I am advised to it, as I would do anything to avoid the gout or put it off, rather than seek it. In short, I shall try a good deal of this air, as long as it suits me; and if it does not,

go somewhere to the sea-side, which has always been more serviceable than any remedy, and as it is my year for the gout, I wish to get a little strength to support it. By Lord Orford succeeding to the last long fit, I have never recovered it. There, madam, if you was my apothecary, I could not have been more circumstantial. Look in the glass, and see if you deserve to be treated like a nurse; but you are so very kind to me, that I write to your heart, not to your face and person. If you were not to be in London, the spring advances so charmingly, I think I should scarce go thither. One is frightened with the inundation of breakfasts and balls that are coming on. Everybody is engaged to everybody for the next three weeks, and if one must hunt for a needle, I had rather look for it in a bottle of hay in the country than in a crowd. I don't want company here; Lord and Lady Strafford are at Twickenham, and the Meynells at your old residence. If I want literature or news, yonder is Mr. Cambridge; politics or places I do not want, or Lord and Lady North are at Bushy. At present I am immersed in Warton's History of Poetry, and can listen to no news that don't begin thus:—

> Herkeneth now, both old and zyng,
> Ffor Marie love, that swete thyng,
> Flow a werre bigan
> Bitweene a god cristene kyng,
> And an hethene heik lordyng,
> Of Damas the Soudan.

If the Czarina takes Constantinople, I shall think it

is the proper conclusion of the story, and only correct the MS. to "god *cristene Queen.*"

Dr. Goldsmith is dead, and my cousin Mrs. Harris. The owl hooted last night on the round tower, and I thought was going to tell me a story for Lady Anne, but had been reading Warton too, and only repeated these lines:—

Than shal you, doughter, aske the wyne,
With spises that be gode and fyne:
Gentyll pottes with genger grene
With dates and deynties you betweene.
Fortie torches, brenynge bright,
At your brydges to bring you lygth.
Into youre chambre they shall you brynge
Wyth muche myrthe and more lykynge.
Your blankettes shalbe of fustyane,
Your shetes shalbe of cloths of rayne,
Your head shete shalbe of pery pyght,
With dyamonds set and rubys bryght.
When you are layd in bed so softe,
A cage of gold shal hange alofte,
With longe peper fayre burning,
And cloves that be swete smellyng,
Frankincense and olibanum,
That whan ye slepe, the taste may come,
And if ye no rest can take,
All nyght mynstrels for you shall wake.

Well, madam, if Lady Anne does not like this promise as well as an Arabian tale, I will burn my books and give over *fairie.* What luxury to repose on fustian blankets and sheets made of the skins of reindeer! Rude and savage as we think our ancestors, you see they indulged in more delicacies than the Maccaronies do. The future Duchess of Devonshire will have nothing but tea and sack-whey, not gentle pots of

ginger green; nor will her head lie soft on a bolster set with diamonds and rubies, unless Miss Loyd and Mrs. Howe hear of this sumptuous description, and insist on Lady Georgiana's having a still richer bolster, —or the *taste will never come.* Adieu! my goddess of health; I cannot be ill or low spirited when I am writing to you.

LETTER XLIV.

Strawberry Hill, June 14, 1774.

Virgin Mary! offended at you, madam! I have crossed myself forty times since I read the impious words, never to be pronounced by human lips,—nay, and to utter them, when I am seemingly to blame,— yet, believe me, my silence is not owing to negligence, or to that most wicked of all sins, inconstancy. I have thought on you waking or sleeping, whenever I have thought at all, from the moment I saw you last; and if there was an echo in the neighbourhood besides Mr. Cambridge, I should have made it repeat your ladyship's name, till the parish should have presented it for a nuisance. I have begun twenty letters, but the naked truth is, I found I had absolutely nothing to say. You yourself owned, madam, that I am grown quite lifeless, and it is very true. I am none of your Glastonbury thorns that blow at Christmas. I am a remnant of the last age, and have nothing to do with the present. I am an exile from the sunbeams of

drawing-rooms; I have quitted the gay scenes of Parliament and the Antiquarian Society; I am not of Almack's; I don't understand horse races; I never go to reviews; what can I have to talk of? I go to no *fêtes champêtres*, what can I have to think of? I know nothing but about myself, and about myself I know nothing. I have scarce been in town since I saw you, have scarce seen anybody here, and don't remember a tittle but having scolded my gardener twice, which, indeed, would be as important an article as any in Montagne's travels, which I have been reading, and if I was tired of his essays, what must one be of these! What signifies what a man thought, who never thought of anything but himself; and what signifies what a man did, who never did anything?

I hear nothing from France, but that M. d'Aiguillon has given up the seals. Lady Mary Coke is arrived, but as she never condescends to level her telescope but at the fixed stars, she certainly knows nothing of the meteors of the day, and, therefore, I shall not expect much intelligence from her.

Mr. Anstey, who ought to have shot himself the moment he had finished the Bath Guide, has published the most complete piece of stupidity I ever read. It is a satire on a parson who writes against him in the newspapers, and cannot, it is impossible, have written worse than Anstey himself. The latter has been enrolled in Mr. Miller's Parnassus at Bath, and is quite raving mad that his *bouts rimés* are not admired. What shall we come to? I am afraid of opening a new

book. The reigning dulness is so profound, that it is not even ridiculous.

Thank heaven the age is as dull as I am! Pray tell me, madam, some of Lady Anne's *bons mots* to enliven me a little. I am expecting Lords Ashburnham, March, Digby, Williams, and George Selwyn.

N.B. I shall not ask for any of the Fagnanina's sayings. It is a dinner in honour of Lord Ashburnham, who procured for me the window of my chapel, which is just finished and divine, and ready against the Catholic religion is quite restored. Miss Aikin has been here this morning (she is just married); she desired to see the Castle of Otranto; I let her see all the antiquities of it.

LETTER XLV.

Strawberry Hill, July 30, 1774.

I CAN satisfy few of your ladyship's questions about Lady Holland, except by what little I heard from Mr. Craufurd, who came hither one evening between eight and nine, and went away the moment he had breakfasted the next morning. Of her death he told me nothing. The fortune he thinks much more considerable than the family expected. This Lord Holland will have 10,000*l.* a-year. Charles Fox will be entirely cleared, have his place, and 200*l.* a-year, and 10,000*l.*, a pretty beginning for a younger brother, for Julius Cæsar not a breakfast. Henry has 20,000*l.*, and

900*l.* a-year. There is a strange legacy to Lady Sarah of 200*l.*, and Mrs. Mellier is forgotten. Undoubtedly poor Lady Holland knew little what she said: indeed, six hundred drops of laudanum every day could leave her very little reflection.

Lord Thomond's no-will is still more surprising, as he was persuaded he should die this year. He had had a draft of a will from his lawyer three years ago, and had not filled up the blanks. As he had taken the government of Lord Egremont's next brother, that boy was supposed his heir. Lord Egremont has made strict inquiry, and said he would comply literally with whatever he could learn were his uncle's instructions; but nobody can recollect the smallest hint. They say Lord Egremont was his favourite, and I believe he chose this way of heaping every thing on the head of the Wyndhams.

Pray, madam, tell the Duchess of Bedford how sensible I am of her goodness. I am thoroughly so of the merits of the whole Fitzpatrickhood, but it is very hard to set me on thrumbing a lyre like an old blind harper when you have such a cygnet amongst you as Mr. Richard.* I shall certainly let him know immediately how glad I shall be to see him, if he will bring his own company with him, or I can assemble any he would like; but do not think I will punish him with a *tête-à-tête*, and my stories of the last age. Nothing upon earth is so insipid as my life to any body but myself. For example, how do you think, madam, he

* The late General Fitzpatrick.—Ed.

would have found me employed if he had called yesterday! Writing the history of Twickenham, and surrounded with books of peerages to find out who an ancient Lady Westmoreland was that lived in the back lane here. Think of my joy when I discovered that she was sister of Grammont's Lady Shrewsbury, and aunt of Myra, of the first Duchess of Richmond, and of a Lady Molyneux, who was a toast of the Kit Cat Club, and died smoking a pipe! Judge how much Mr. Fitzpatrick would be amused with such game!

There is little probability of my accompanying Lady Ailesbury and Mrs. Damer to Paris. I am within two months of my biennial fit of the gout, and for the last four days have been alarmed with symptoms of it as great nervousness and feverish pains flying about me. It would be more prudent to go to Bath, or to the seaside, I detest the first, and do not know how to amuse myself at the second. In truth I am not very ill, for I slept last night from half an hour past twelve till nine; but my dread of the gout is incredible, and of having it anywhere but at home still greater, so that unless I have a slight fit soon, I shall not have courage for a long journey, though I have curiosity to peep at the new reign. I have been charmingly interrupted; Mr. Fitzpatrick has been here two hours; I told him what I had said to your ladyship, and sent him back with his pocket stuffed with books, but such as he may read when his servant is curling his hair. One was a collection of ballads in Queen Anne's time; I hope they will put him in tune—now for the Court of France.

Monsieur de Boynes, a rising genius in the last ministry, is turned out, and a Monsieur Turgot made Secretary of State for the marine in his room, a friend of Maurepas. The Duke of Orleans and the Duke of Chartres are forbidden the Court for refusing to assist at the Catafalque of the late king, where they must have saluted the parliament, whom they will not acknowledge—however this rod is supposed to be laid on only in ceremony, and my letters bid me not conclude thence that the new parliament will be maintained; accordingly I conclude it will not. My faith about things indifferent is pretty obedient and may be led like a child. Consequently I would not for the world have a table of *trou-madame*, without a king and a queen: I should detest a republican table, and wish I could have one cut out of the same log of wood with your ladyship's for the sake of the hereditary line.

Let me beseech you if it thunders to go into the cellar, and say the collect about bad weather. I could not bear another disappointment in the right line, and am not indifferent to that succession, but beg my *trou-madame* may have a king as well as a queen.

LETTER XLVI.

Thursday, Aug. 11, 1774.

Though my chaise is at the door, and the wind and tide fair, I cannot receive a line from you, madam, to tell me so kindly you are well, without stop-

ping a minute to answer it. I am disappointed, I am vexed, but I am happy you are so soon in spirits again. Don't trust to your strength, nor your health, which is the only way to keep both. Don't be brave this month : the weather is already much cooler, and you need not catch cold to prove how intolerable the heat is. I don't design to acknowledge Anne III.; I shall call her *Madame de trop*, as they named one of the late King of France's daughters. A *dauphin!* a *dauphin!* I will repeat it as often as *the Graces*. *Apropos*, Mr. Cambridge came yesterday and said he must ask to see something I had lately written. I had kept it a profound secret, but concluded Garrick had told him of the verses, and that it was vain to deny them. Well, I produced them. He stared, was civil about them, and said he was glad he had got them into the bargain, for he had not heard of them, but meant the parody of Lord Chesterfield's letters, which was quite out of my head. I was horridly out of countenance and to rap my own fingers for my blunder, would not shew him what he wanted. This comes of your ladyship's flattering me!

One may weed and weed one's heart, but if a grain of that devil, vanity, lights on it, it springs up till it choaks one. You have no notion how vexed I was at my own folly — a boy-poet would scarce have been caught so! It is in vain to say, the woman gave me and I did eat.

Adieu! my Eve ; as angry as I am, I wish you no

worse punishment, than hers, and I hope it will fall on you before eleven months are over.

LETTER XLVII.

Strawberry Hill, Monday night, Aug. 23, 1774.

YOUR ladyship's letter did not arrive till I was gone to Goodwood, and sat here quietly till I returned to night, for as my voyages and travels are seldom longer than a parenthesis, I never oblige my despatches to follow me. Though you do not ask, I am sure you wish to know what I heard of the Duchess of Leinster. Not a word was mentioned. Last night the Duke received a letter to tell him his niece is married to Lord Bellamont. Lady A. asked the Duchess of R. about the mother. She said they had heard the report, but did not believe it; and indeed they were all in such good spirits, that I cannot think they give any credit to the marriage.

I saw charming Lady Sarah, who is a little fatter, but as fresh and beautiful as ever: her little girl is sweetly pretty and lively. We had much billiards, music, loo, and company; I could take no part in the two first; I love most of the last, that I know, and as there were two or three children, and two or three-and-forty dogs, I could not want amusement, for I generally prefer both to what the common people call *Christians*.

I like all the account you give me, madam, but

of your nerves, and of those I don't at all despair. When Madame de Trop ceases to be the youngest of your race, I dare to say I shall love her, especially when Lady Anne begins to love her less than her brother; but, remember, a brother is the *sine qua non* of my reconciliation.

I don't pretend to call this a letter, it is only a note, I know; but what can I tell you, madam, from country-houses? or is anything so bad as a letter when one has really no news, and nothing particular to say?

P.S. I had sealed my letter, but open it again that your ladyship may have the freshest intelligence of the following great news—very important, at least, to my friends in France. In a postscript I have just received are these words:—

"Choses nouvelles et très certaines, M. Terray est exilé à la Motte. M. Turgot a les Finances. M. de Sartine la Marine. La Police n'est point donnée. M. le Chancelier est exilé pour trois jours à la Bruière, au bout desquels trois jours il a ordre d'aller dans une de ses terres beaucoup plus éloignées. M. de Miromenil ci-devant Premier President de Rouen, est Garde des Sceaux, et Vice-Chancelier."—I am going to make a French bonfire.

LETTER XLVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 14, 1774.

MADAM,

"Methinks an Æsop's fable you relate," as Dryden says in the Hind and Panther. A mouse that wraps itself in a French cloak and sleeps on a couch; and a goldfinch that taps at the window and swears it will come in to quadrille at eleven o'clock, at night! no, no, these are none of Æsop's cattle; they are too fashionable to have lived so near the creation. The Mouse is neither Country Mouse nor City Mouse; and whatever else he may be, the goldfinch must be a Maccaroni, or at least of the *Sçavoir vivre*. I do not deny but I have some skill in expounding types and portents; and could give a shrewd guess at the identical persons who have travestied themselves into a quadruped and biped—but the truth is, I have no mind, madam, to be Prime Minister. King Pharaoh is mighty apt on emergencies to send for us soothsayers, and put the whole kingdom into our hands, if his butler or baker, with whom he is wont to gossip, does but tell him of a cunning man.

I have no ambition to supplant Lord North—especially as the season approaches when I dread the gout; and I should be very sorry to be fetched out of my bed to pacify America. To be sure, madam, you give me a fair field for uttering oracles: however, all I will unfold is, that the emblematic animals have

no views on Lady Louisa.* The omens of her fortune are in herself; and I will burn my books, if beauty, sense, and merit, do not bestow all the happiness on her they prognosticate.

I can as little agree to the Duchess of M.'s solution of the Duchess of L.'s marriage, which, by the way, is at least not over yet. Nor do I believe, *whatever mamma knows*, that she will agree to it either; and, for this reason, the efficacy of pregnancy on a delicate constitution is no lasting nostrum. A husband would be but a temporary preservative, and useless, when the operations of the remedy could not possibly be of any service. Alas! is a poor sick lady to leave off the drug when it can no longer produce the wholesome tumour on the patient!

I doubt the Duchess of M. did not advert to the vicinity of that hopeless season in the Duchess of L., or I think her grace would not have laid down a position from which such disagreeable consequences might be drawn.

I like the blue eyes, madam, better than the denomination of Lady Gertrude Fitzpatrick, which, all respectable as it is, is very harsh and rough sounding; pray let her change it with the first goldfinch that offers. Nay, I do not even trust to the blueth of the eyes. I do not believe they last once in twenty times. One cannot go into any village fifty miles from

* Lady Louisa Fitzpatrick, Lord Ossory's sister, afterwards married to the Earl of Shelburne, the mother of the present Marquis of Lansdowne.—Ed.

London without seeing a dozen little children with flaxen hair and eyes of sky-blue. What becomes of them all? One does not see a grown Christian with them twice in a century, except in poetry.

The Strawberry Gazette is very barren of news. Mr. Garrick has the gout, which is of more consequence to the metropolis than to Twitnamshire. Lady Hertford dined here last Saturday, brought her loo party and stayed supper; there were Lady Mary Coke, Mrs. Howe, and the Colonels Maude and Keene. This was very heroic, for one is robbed every hundred yards. Lady Hertford herself was attacked last Wednesday on Hounslow Heath at three in the afternoon, but she had two servants on horseback, who would not let her be robbed, and the highwayman decamped.

The greatest event I know was a present I received last Sunday, just as I was going to dine at Lady Blandford's, to whom I sacrificed it. It was a bunch of grapes as big—as big—as that the two spies carried on a pole to Joshua; for spies in those days, when they robbed a vineyard, were not at all afraid of being overtaken. In good truth this bunch weighed three pounds and a half, *cote rotie* measure; and was sent to me by my neighbour Prado, of the tribe of Issachar, who is descended from one of foresaid spies, but a good deal richer than his ancestor. Well, madam, I carried it to the Marchioness, but gave it to the *maître d'hôtel,* with injunctions to conceal it till the dessert. At the end of dinner, Lady Bland-

ford said, she had heard of three immense bunches of grapes at Mr. Prado's at a dinner he had made for Mr. Ellis. I said those things were always exaggerated. She cried, oh! but Mrs. Ellis told it, and it weighed I don't know how many pounds, and the Duke of Argyle had been to see the hothouse, and she wondered, as it was so near, I would not go and see it. Not I, indeed, said I; I dare to say there is no curiosity in it. Just then entered the gigantic bunch. Everybody screamed. There, said I, I will be shot if Mr. Prado has such a bunch as yours. In short, she suspected Lady Egremont, and the adventure succeeded to admiration. If you will send the Bedfordshire waggon, madam, I will beg a dozen grapes for you.

Mr. Barker may pretend what he will, but if he liked Strawberry Hill so well, he would have visited it again, and by daylight. He could see no more of it at nine o'clock at night than he does at this moment.

Pray, madam, is not it Farming-Woods' tide?* Who is to have the care of the dear mouse in your absence? I wish I could spare Margaret, who loves all creatures so well that she would have been happy in the Ark, and sorry when the Deluge ceased; unless people had come to see Noah's old house, which she would have liked still better than cramming his menagerie.

* The period of the year when Lady Ossory left Ampthill for Farming Woods.—Ed.

Postscript, *entre nous*. Have you heard that certain verses have been read inadvertently to the D. of Gr.? I long to know, but cannot learn who was the ingenious person.

LETTER XLIX.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 15, 1774.

WHY, madam, you are a Proteus in petticoats, and every day appear in some new character! Three days ago you was setting out ambassadress to Spain: to-day you are agent for Mr. Ongley, and carrying a county election. Next week I suppose you will set out for Rome and make a Pope. I am sorry to put you in mind of an old observation, that they who attempt everything, seldom are at the head of anything. You will not be the most conspicuous of ambassadresses, unless you go in your own right, as the Marechale de Guebriant was sent to Poland without her husband. You will not be the first of electresses, unless you sit on the hustings like the Duchess of Northumberland. As to going to Madrid without Lord Ossory, you would not dislike it, if it was only to disappoint me of a son and heir; but let me see you in the porch of Bedford church, clapping Tom and John on the back, and tossing up a diamond cap in a huzza! Seriously, I should be very unhappy if I believed in your embassy, but as *we were assured of it on creditable authority*, I was very little frightened, besides

some private reasons of my own for doubting. It was not from your ladyship's silence. The corps diplomatique I know keep secrets even after they have been in the Gazette, and were I impertinent enough to ask the question, to be sure you would answer like the Tuscan Envoy on Cromwell's death, "Some say we are to go to Spain, some say we are not; for my part, I believe neither one nor t'other."

You ask me, madam, what *I* am doing? As I have no public character nor am tied to any mystery, I can answer very explicitly, what I generally am doing, laughing at everybody else. I have escaped the two things I hate and dread the most, Parliament and the gout; the first, as I told you in my last, might have happened *now*, in spite of my teeth, if my nephew had continued as bad as he was; the last I feared I should have had before this time, but *my reckoning was out last night*, and I have now great confidence in the bootikins for keeping it off.

I sing Io Pæan to Apollo, as god of medicine, for putting off both my nephew's fit and mine, and give a loose to my spirits by diverting myself with all you who are over head and ears in elections, while I am enjoying the sunshine of October, and see even the horse-chestnuts in full leaf; but I beg your ladyship's pardon, what care you what a man does who has not a freehold in the world?

What an insignificant being! and the old fool pretends to be happy! I own it is very insolent at fifty-eight to be even contented; but what can I do, ma-

dam, if I had any misfortunes I should consider how short a time they could last; and the gout itself, about which I own I am no stoic, must be cured, or deliver me for ever. Not that I am like poor Lord Holland, and wish to die. I like life extremely, if I hold it on no worse terms. I am not likely to play the fool myself, and one may trust that there are enough that will, to keep one in diversion. It is all the ill-will I have to the world; and as I have too much sense to think of curing anybody, I hope it is a very innocent amusement to sit in my own room and smile,—I mean for anybody but a Spanish ambassadress. What difficulty I should have, if I lived to your return, to compose my face to becoming gravity; and if I heard you ring and order your Majordomo to call Lady Anne's Duenna! I would try to behave as properly as if you made me

Your Excellency's, &c., &c.,

The Governor of Barataria.

LETTER L.

Strawberry, Hill Oct. 27, 1774.

Don't be angry, dear lady! I did not mean any offence to your conjugal zeal. I always knew you could fill any part you please, and could carry a county election as easily as the prize at a ball. When I compared you to the Duchess of Charing Cross, as the newspapers call her, was it possible you should think I saw any resemblance? If *you* took it for a sneer, *she*

must have taken it for a compliment, which I doubt she would not do. Your troubles, I hope, are over and crowned with victory; mine are so, if you do not go to Madrid.

I know nothing, for I will not know the only thing that is to be known, elections. I am even ignorant who is chosen for my Lord Orford's boroughs. As he is so perfectly in his senses, I suppose he has brought in some men of quality or great speakers, or that some minister has recommended to him an intimate friend, who will give *credit* to the recommender, and be useful to my lord himself. Had he remained out of order, somebody or other might have taken advantage of his weakness, and imposed somebody upon him that would disgrace him; but as he is so well, I am easy. I do not desire the little vanity of having everybody say, that if I had had the management of his affairs, he would not have been exposed; nor could any man, surely, who wished me ill, make such a blunder as to give me that triumph!

Have you heard, madam, of the quaker that has dined with the Comtes de Provence and d'Artois? It is exactly true. He would not pull off his hat; they admitted him with it on, and then made him sit down to table with them. Charles II. could not have been better humoured.

They say the late Pope was poisoned by the Jesuits. These gentlemen and the Czarina will repoison many royal personages that Voltaire had unpoisoned; and as he has both abused and praised the Jesuits, he may

take which side he pleases, as he has done about every other question.

In the neighbouring city of Twickenham they talk of nothing but houses broken open and robbed. I have called my militia into my castle, and mounted cannon on the battlements. Yet I was more afraid of a contested election for Middlesex; and when it was threatened, I thought I would not be the Duke of Northumberland's fine gate at Sion for the world. In short, one lives in very perilous times! The powder mills blow one up, and break all one's painted glass; one is robbed on the highway, though one is Prime Minister, and shot at into the bargain. I don't know what we shall come to, madam; pray, do you? And pray, don't you think it is all that Wilkes's doing? Everybody would be good, and honest, and quiet, if it was not for him. Lady Greenwich and I think so, and we hope you are of our opinion; and wonder some Christian don't murder him.

LETTER LI.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 14, 1774.

I SHOULD not have been silent so long, madam, had I had anything agreeable to tell you; but really the times are so melancholy, that I do not care to trouble my friends with my gloomy reflections. I do not indeed know what is the matter, nor what I am so grieved about, but still as long as I see that

There is something rotten in the state of Denmark,

I am too good a patriot or courtier, which is the same thing, not to have my bosom full of cares and anxiety.

> Portents and prodigies have grown so frequent
> That they have lost their name.

I cannot say that the Thames has run backwards or overflown Richmond Hill, that the stars drop out of their sockets, that I have heard wolves howl at noonday, or that the churchyard has given up its dead to frighten people into their senses, instead of out of them, as ghosts one should think would do, if one did not know the contrary from the best authorities. Still indubitably the times are out of joint, and one must despair of the commonwealth, when Marcus Portius Bradshaw falls by his own hand, and Scotch dukes fall into horse-ponds as they are taking a walk in a fine November evening; but I will not fill your ladyship's mind with the apprehensions that these omens have raised in mine; I will quit the subject, and answer your letter.

You do me a great deal too much honour in suspecting me of writing a speech for the new senator. All the good things in that speech were G. Selwyn's, and have been repeated in every coffee-house in town these three weeks; and though I am sorry my nephew's madness has exposed him to the dirty malice of any body that had too little generosity not to take advantage of it, I should not have been the person certainly to joke on such an occasion, divert the town at the expense of so near a relation, to whom I trust I have shewn very different attention. Madness

is an excuse for my nephew; they who make a friend of Macreth without being out of their senses, have I suppose very good or very bad reasons for it.

Don't imagine, madam, that I shall congratulate you on the sale of your house, at least not till I hear you have bought another. I still less can compliment you on Lord Ossory's flinging away so much money on an election, and not for himself, who was sure of his own seat. However, I do not deny but there was a greatness of mind in it, at least gratitude, considering the many favours* he has received, and that he is the only one of his connexion that has received any.

I am not settled in Arlington Street, nor shall be till after Christmas, madam. I grow so old, that I find the quiet composed life I lead here more agreeable than the ways of London, and the same eternal round of the very same things. I am making catalogues of my collection, building a hot-house, ranging my medals which I have brought hither, sorting and burning papers, in short, *setting my house in order* against a certain time that happens but once in one's *life*, and which one has not time to think of in town. I have consequently not seen Armida nor Mrs. Abingdon's coeffure, which I conclude consists of as many plumes as the helmet of Otranto. The only time

* It is difficult to discover to what these words "many favours" allude. The only one that Lord Ossory could have been said to have received from the Government was the Lord Lieutenancy of Bedfordshire. There does not either appear to have been a contest for that county; the expenses, however, might have been incurred in the town.—Ed.

I saw Lady Mary Somerset she had moulted her feathers, and wore a hat over her nose, so I only fell in love with her chin. The measles I had in the last century, and as it is one of the juvenile attributes that one does not cut a second time, like one's colt's tooth and a caper, I shall take care not to appear in public till the fashion is over that I may be *censé* to be confined with a red face instead of a very pale one. I rejoice for Lady Louisa's sake that the measles leave no marks: she will lose nothing by a fortnight's eclipse. The only new thing I know is that I have heard Leoni, and don't remember that I ever was so pleased with a voice since *you* were born; and yet he was hoarse, by an accident which the Jews don't quite prevent.

LETTER LII.

Arlington Street, Nov. 23, 1774.

I AM in town, madam, and in great distress. I have lost a most faithful friend and servant, my deputy Mr. Tullie, and as I am a *Roi Fainéant*, I know not how to conduct my own affairs. One's first thought you may be sure is to send for Lord Chatham, but as I have difficulties enough, I don't want to be helped into more; and therefore I shall leave that resource to my heir apparent, Mr. Martin; and only consult *my friends*. It is some comfort to me that Mr. Tullie did not die *en ministre*, but in his bed. The nation had another great loss last night: Lord

Clive went off suddenly. He had been sent for to town by one of his Indian friends—and died. You may imagine, madam, all that is said already. In short, people will be forced to die before as many witnesses, as an old Queen is brought to bed, or the coroner will be sent for.

Have you got the History of the Troubadours? It is very curious: I have longed for it several years, and yet am cruelly disappointed. St. Palaye was too old to put his materials together; his friends called, odd man! and nothing was ever so dully executed. You will say of the chapters, as I did of the houses at Paris, there is such a sameness, that one does not know whether one is in that one is in, or in that one came out of.

Lord H. has just been here, and told me *the manner* of Lord Clive's death. Whatever had happened, it had flung him into convulsions, to which he was very subject. Dr. Fothergill gave him, as he had done on like occasions, a dose of laudanum, but the pain in his bowels was so violent, that he asked for a second dose. Dr. Fothergill said, if he took another, he would be dead in an hour. The moment Fothergill was gone, he swallowed another, for another it seems stood by him, and he is dead.

I am very sorry to hear Lord Holland is so ill. Does not Lord Ossory come to renew his senatorial dignity?

LETTER LIII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 1, 1775.

THIS morning, madam, as soon as my eyes opened, Philip stood before me, bearing in one hand a shining vest, and in the other a fair epistle, written in celestial characters, which, however, it was given me to understand.

The present, I saw, came from no mortal hand, and seemed to be the boon of all the gods, or rather of all the goddesses; for there was taste, fancy, delicacy, flattery, wit, and sentiment in it, and so artfully blended, that no celestial in breeches could possibly have mixed so bewitching a potion. Venus had chosen the pattern, Flora painted the roses after those at Paphos, Minerva had worked the tambour part, Clio wrote the ode, and Thalia took off the majestic stiffness of the original sketch by breathing her own ease all over it.

These visions naturally presented themselves. I told you, madam, I was but just awake, and at that hour, somehow or other, one's head is very apt to be full of Venus and such pretty figures. Vanity soon took their place, and, not to be unworthy of my visitants, I held up my head, and thought it became so favoured a personage as myself to assume a loftier port, and behave like my predecessors who had been honoured in the same manner.

Was I more like Æneas when his mother brought him armour of heavenly temper, or like Paris when three divinities exerted all their charms and all their

artifices to ensnare his partiality? To be sure I could have been simple enough to be content with the character of Horatius Flaccus, with which my patronesses had hailed me; but when I ordered Philip to reach me my lyre, that I might pour out a rapturous epode or secular hymn in gratitude, he said, "Lord! sir, you know Horace's lyre is at Ampthill."

What follows is more melancholy. I rose; the first object was to examine more attentively the inspired vest in the full sun against which it shone gorgeously; but, alas! as I crept to the window, in the glass I beheld—what do you think, madam?—such an emaciated, wan, wrinkled, poor skeleton, that—O! adieu, visions, goddesses, odes, vests of roses, and immortal Strawberry!—I thought I saw a thinner Don Quixote attired by the duchess for sport. Shocked, sunk from my altitudes, and shrinking into myself, I bade Philip Pança fold up the vest, and vowed never to dress up my ghost-like Adonis, but to consecrate the dear work of dear fingers to the single word (I will believe in the charming ode) Friendship; and may the memory of that word, the vest and the ode, exist when Strawberry Hill, its tinsel glories and its master, are remembered no where else!

LETTER LIV.

Arlington Street, Jan. 12, 1775.

You wanted to see my hand-writing again, madam, and now you will be tired of it; but I have

this instant received Miss Vernon's pretty fable and verses, and can I help thanking her and you as quick as possible? There is a natural simplicity in her fable, that pleases me infinitely more, than if she had gathered a nosegay of poetic words, and only disposed them in a new garland, as young shepherdesses that read romances generally do, and without genuine invention. As she shews parts and observation, the embroidery will come of itself afterwards. To the praises she bestows on me, I am very sensible, because I am sure they flow from a kind and amiable heart,—rather, from a complimentary one; but pray, madam, tell her that I have neither acquired fame nor can bestow it, and that my name is Horace, only because I had godfathers and godmothers, and not because I have the least resemblance to a very great poet so called, any more than I should have to the apostle, if I had been christened Matthew. When I am likened to my heathen predecessor, it only reminds me of my infinite inferiority, and would not be allowed any where but at the puppet-show-Parnassus at Batheaston. I have just got Mrs. Miller's bouquet of artificial flowers, and have only had time to dip upon it, and see how very ridiculous compliments undeserved may make one! You will there see how immortality is plentifully promised to riddles and *bouts rimés*, and a jar dressed up with ribands. I once did wish for fame, I own—now I dread it; for it is like diamonds, of little value, unless of the first water,—and who would be fine in Bristol-stones?

Pray, madam, send me all the productions of Ampthill. Everything is agreeable of one's own society, and when it means to go no farther. I think this is all that is left me that I care for, or have any eagerness about,—I am sure that I read with any pleasure. What should I read else? I know all that can be told me of the periods I delight in. I can scarce read Grammont and Madame de Sevigné, because I know them by heart. Can I pore over American disputes, which I never did nor ever shall understand? Do I care for hearing how many ways Mr. Burke can make a mosaic pavement or an inlaid cabinet? Can I be diverted with Mr. Cumberland's comedies, or Garrick's nonsensical epilogues? No! truly. I am almost as sick of our literature, as of our politics and politicians; and, therefore, if you have any charity, my lady, send me all the Ampthilliana, or rather bring them to Grosvenor Place, which I promise to be reconciled to, and where we will not make a Helicon of tin and a Parnassus of pasteboard. Let us leave the whole Castalian State to the Bufos and Bufesses, and divert ourselves without trusting posterity with our secrets.

LETTER LV.

January 15, 1775.

I AM glad I opened the letter myself, madam; I would not have had Kirgate see it for the world, and therefore attempt to write an answer in my lap with

only one hand. If no man is a hero in the eyes of his valet de chambre, what must a miserable author be in those of his printer! You think you have sent me some very pretty verses, madam, and so you have—very pretty indeed; for poetry can create, paint, or call from the grave, and the less solidity there is in the vision the more enchanting are its hues; but if truth presents its glass, the rainbow disappears, and nothing remains but what I have found, *Verses on a Death's head!*—and *my immortal fame* may walk perhaps to the publication of the next monthly magazine. In serious earnest, I do think it is such an impertinence in every little scribbler in a parish to accept new-year's gifts of immortal fame from their friends, that, at the risk of ingratitude, I must protest against the practice.

As an antiquary, madam, I am better diverted. I can but imagine how the grave professors of our mystery will be embarrassed a thousand years hence (which is all the portion of futurity in my disposal) to discover who the immortal man was that will live only in your ladyship's lines. Nay, what if the reverse of your compliment should happen, and the author should only be discovered by his printer! Such mortifications have happened to as great German and Batavian wits as I am, and therefore I beg, madam, you will treat my co-labourer Kirgate with more respect, as, should fame happen to have a library of rare editions, I may be admitted there only under his auspices. Upon the whole, to your ladyship and him I commit

the whole reversion of my future renown, where I am sure it will be in better hands than in my own; and I do hereby appoint and declare my said loving Muse and faithful Printer joint executrix and executor of this my last will and testament, written all with my own hand this fifteenth day of January, in the first and last year of my immortality, and in the no less immortal reign of G. III., by the want of grace late King of France and America, &c.

LETTER LVI.

Arlington Street, Jan. 21, 1775.

No; I will never read nonsense again with a settled resolution of being diverted! The miscellany from Batheaston is ten degrees duller than a magazine, and which is wondrous, the noble authors it adds to my Catalogue are the best of this foolish Parnassus. There is one very pretty copy by Lord Palmerston; and the Duchess of Northumberland has got very jollily through her task. I have scarce been better diverted by Dr. Johnson's Tour to the Western Isles. What a heap of words to express very little! and though it is the least cumbrous of any style he ever used, how far from easy and natural! He hopes nobody but is glad that a boatful of sacrilege, a diverting sin! was shipwrecked. He believes in second sight, and laughs at poor Pennant for credulity! The King sent for the book in MS., and then wondering,

said, "I protest, Johnson seems to be a Papist and a Jacobite!"—so he did not know why he had been made to give him a pension!

I must cross the sea, madam, if I tell you anything better, and so I will. One of the ladies to the Queen of France announced to her that the Comtesse d'Artois was breeding. The Queen was a little piqued and envious; and to conceal it, said, "I wonder what the child will be called?" The lady answered, "I hope, madam, *le Precurseur*."

This story is only the precursor of one ten thousand times better, which I reserved. The Comte d'Artois, forgetting that his brother is King, treats him with all the familiarity of their nursery. It was thought necessary to correct this; and M. de Maurepas was commissioned to give the hint. Being urged, he said, the King would grow offended. "Well," said the prince, "and if he is, *que peut-il me faire?*" "*Vous pardonner, Monseigneur,*" replied the minister. If you don't admire this more than any reply in your Diogenes Laertius, and ancient authors, I will never tell your ladyship another modern story.

Well! I am come back to England, and here I find no bad saying of an English Queen. The crowd at the birthday was excessive, and had squeezed and shoved and pressed upon the Queen in the most hoyden manner. As she went out of the Drawing-room, somebody said in flattery, "the crowd was very great."—"Yes," said the Queen, "and wherever one went, the Queen was in every body's way."

I have written this since I came home to-night, Thursday, on my way towards Saturday's post, that I might not forget the *bons-mots* I had collected for my gazette. To-morrow, I expect, will produce longer speeches.

I know what I know. To-morrow is to happen a great event—I will not tell you what, till I know myself what it does produce. If it was not too late for the post, I would send away my letter this instant, that I might keep your ladyship and lordship in expectation for a whole night. Now I think of it, I can send it away to-morrow, and keep all Ampthill in equal suspense. I believe I shall—I don't know whether I shall or not—well, I will consider of it.

LETTER LVII.

January 24, 1775.

I RETURN the rebus, which I forgot to commend as it deserves, having seen it before; but I cannot tell my stories now, having much more melancholy employment. The Duke of Gloucester is dying; the physicians have no hopes, nor the poor duchess! Though I am a bad courtier, I must be a good uncle; and even a good courtier, when I can never be rewarded for it.

The House of Commons sat till past nine last night on petitions; but the newspapers are now tolerable journals. Lord Stanley spoke for the first time and

pleased by his manner: his matter they say, would have pleased as well on any other day.

The Cophthi were an Egyptian race, of whom nobody knows anything but the learned; and thence I gave Mrs. Montagu's Academics the name of Coptic, a derivation not worth repeating or explaining. Tom Hervey is dead; after sending for his wife and re-acknowledging her in pathetic heroics.

LETTER LVIII.

Saturday Evening.

Oh, the pretty easy affectionate verses! but I beg your pardon for not returning them last night: I had not time, for I had dined out, and did not receive them till the post was gone. But the great event—well, it must stay,—I cannot drop Lord Ossory so. Madam, madam, if your heart did not cry its eyes out, it is rock and flint, and all the hard things ladies' hearts used to be made of. Mine, that has hardly any eyes or ears left, was charmed with the harmony and touched with the sensibility. I forgive the dairy next door to the hospital, and don't wonder that

> With such a companion to tend a few sheep,
> To rise up and play, and to lie down and sleep,

you have no taste for anything but milking cows. The ten last lines have more feeling and sentiment than ever were written by lovers, and are a better sermon in behalf of marriage than all that has been preached from

St. Paul to St. Whitfield. I have not kept a copy, because I never break my trust, but I do ask them seriously, only desiring the first line, which has a foot too much, may be shortened, and they will be perfect, which they ought to be, when they are so near it.

Alas! the great event was addled, or came to little. I had been told that Lord Chatham was commissioned by Dr. Franklin to offer the King 350,000*l.* a-year from America, if the offensive bills were repealed. The ministers thought he was to ask for an increase of force, so their intelligence was at last no better than mine! But, indeed, who could guess what he would do? He did appear, and did move to address for a recall of the troops from Boston, a very Pindaric transition from the first step towards a pacification to the last! In heroic poems it is a rule to begin in the middle, and great poets and great orators are very like in more instances than one. He was very hostile and so was Lord Camden; but the generals being braver than the troops, some of the latter ran away, as Colonel Coventry and Cornet Grosvenor. The numbers were 68 to 18. The Duke of Cumberland, who would have joined his regiment if it had been raised, to the vanquished, was among the slain; but in truth the subject is a little too serious for joking. The war on America is determined on. Four regiments more are ordered thither, and every hostile measure is to be pursued. The wise measures of last year have already begotten a civil war. What that will beget,

"The child that is unborn will rue!"

If Lord Chatham said true yesterday, the ministers are already checkmated and have not a move to make.

Pray, madam, remember I tell you Stories about the Children in the Wood and Lord Hardwicke, and Barry, and Princess Amelie and twenty others which I have not time for now, for I have more business of one body's or other, than Lord North, and do rather more.

I will only say now that I am *becoptied* at last, enlisted in Mrs. Weesey's academy, and am to go thither to-morrow-se'nnight to hear a Mr. Tig-he repeat parts of Mr. Jephson's tragedy, which I am persuaded is very good, and so good that I wish I could hear it all at once; but one might as well sit down to read Byshe's Art of Poetry, as hear scraps of a plot one does not know. But I must obey; good night, Arria and Pætus without a Nero!

LETTER LIX.

February 1, 1775.

We are out of pain at present, madam, about our Royal Highness. He has been out to take the air; and if I had any influence, should try that in France immediately; but he says he should only pass the remaining part of the winter in bad inns, and thinks of not setting out till April.

I know nothing of news: Lord Chatham is at this moment preparing some in the House of Lords, which will furnish the end of the letter. Last night I was

at a ball at the Lady's Club. It was all goddesses, instead of being a resurrection of dancing matrons as usual. The Duchess of Devonshire effaces all without being a beauty; but her youth, figure, flowing good-nature, sense, and lively modesty, and modest familiarity make her a phænomenon. Don't wonder I was at a ball; I have discovered that I am a year younger than I thought, yet I shall not use this year yet, but come out with it a dozen years hence.

Mr. Jephson's tragedy, which I concluded would not answer all that I had heard of it, exceeded my expectations infinitely. The language is noble, the poetry, similies and metaphors, enchanting. The harmony, the modulation of the lines, shews he has the best ear in the world. I remember nothing at all equal to it appearing in my time, though I am Methusalem in my memory of the stage. I don't know whether it will have all the effect there it deserves, as the story is so well known, and the happy event of it known too, which prevents *attendrissement*. Besides, the subject in reality demands but two acts, for the conspiracy and the revolution; but one can never be tired of the poetry that protracts it. Would you believe I am to appear on the theatre along with it? my Irish friends, the Binghams, have overpersuaded me to write an epilogue, which was wanting. They gave me the subject, which I have executed miserably; but at least I do not make the new Queen of Portugal lay aside her majesty, and sell *double entendres* like Lady Bridget Tollemache.

I was still more surprised to find my name in print the other day: Mr. Barry, the mad Irish painter, has written a book, and not a mad or insensible one. After talking of the great masters, he says, "as to the Dutch school, I leave it to the deep researches of the Hon. H. W. [at length,] or any other such learned gentleman, if such another can be found." Methinks this is a little hard, madam, seeing I have been always blamed for undervaluing the Dutch masters; but I suppose Mr. Barry has seen me laugh at some of his extravagances in the expositions, without my knowing him. However, I shall say nothing of that, or any thing more to hurt him, if ever I defend myself from Dutchism, as perhaps I may. This, I remember, was one of the stories I promised you—I forget the rest; but your ladyship will remind me when we meet over a syllabub under the cow.

2nd.

Yesterday's mountain miscarried with more *éclat* than last time. Lord Chatham offered a bill for pacifying America by abrogating the Declaratory Law and the late Acts; and they say, recalled the memory of his ancient lustre. Lord Gower reminding him of something he had said in the other house the Lord knows when, received a thundering denial, as the gods call it; but men, a flat lie. Lord Temple lamented the production of so mischievous a bill, which yet he would vote to admit out of respect; but what signifies repeating the faint efforts of an old watergall opposed to its own old sun! The Duke of Grafton complained

of a bill so hurried in. Lord Chatham replied, his grace was at least as unfairly eager to hurry it out. That duke acquainted the assembly that he differs with every body, and has a plan of his own to offer. Lord Shelburne was violent, and Lord Mansfield so violently frightened, that he was not there; on which I hear King George joked before all his servants, when he was told it after the play. The newspapers, which now are very accurate in recounting debates, will tell your ladyship the rest very faithfully to-morrow. When the last prime-minister designs to open his plan, I do not know; the present produces his to-day. There is a great deal of bravery and a great deal of terror stirring; and the address of to-day, I am told, has a layer of each. You must prepare, madam, to talk America; there is no other topic to be heard, and in truth it grows a very grave one. You must lay aside your botany from the hyssop to the cedar of Libanus, and study imports and exports, and charters and geography, and religion and government, and such light reading: you will have occasion for it all. In a little time the whole country will be so much in earnest, that the dispute will probably lie in a less compass; people discuss at first, but are only angry and personal at last: and to be sure that is more amusing.

I hope this is the last letter I shall send you before you land at Hyde Park turnpike. You will have a very good neighbourhood there; Lord and Lady Apsley are mighty agreeable people.

LETTER LX.

Friday night, 11 o'clock, June 23, 1775.

You was much in the right indeed, madam, not to come to town for the foolish regatta, as I did, and of which I have seen no more than I do now. I went at six o'clock to Richmond House, and it was beautiful to see the Thames covered with boats, barges, and streamers, and every window and house-top loaded with spectators. I suppose so many will not meet again till the day of judgement, which was not to-day.

In the middle of the river was a street of lighters and barges covered with pent-houses like a carpenter's yard, which totally prevented all the other millions seeing any thing. The rowers passed through this street, and so we never beheld them at all. It rained once or twice and cleared the gardens and shores, and now all the company is stewing in Ranelagh. A great deal of the show was spoilt by every body being in black; it looked like a general mourning for Amphitrite, rather than for the Queen of Denmark. The corps diplomatique was in the lord-mayor's barge. There are such tides of people in the streets, that I could scarce pass home. I feel as glad to be returned as I did from the coronation, and I think will go to no more sights.

I know nothing more to tell your ladyship. The town says it expects an embassy to Lord Chatham. I will not come to see his entry, for I have still less curiosity about ministers than puppet shows.

In truth I grow so old or so indolent, or so both, that I prefer the tranquillity of Strawberry to almost everything. But I will not tire your ladyship with my own negativeness. I write only to prove what I hope is not necessary, how constantly you are in my mind, and that I would tell you anything amusing if I knew it.

LETTER LXI.

Arlington Street, July 7, 1775.

It is strange to say, madam, that I who generally know my own mind as soon as I have a mind, and who am a very methodical general, have not yet settled the plan of my operations for my summer campaign. One of my expeditions will certainly be to Ampthill; but I cannot precisely say when, as I have not fixed the day when my squadron is to sail for the coast of France, which is to be the great *coup* of my measures. I do not stay to join or to watch the Spanish Armada, nor wait for the result of the American Congress; but a little business of my own throws uncertainty into all my deliberations, and is so little a business, that like greater men, I am forced to disguise the true cause, and give it dignity by a veil of mystery. I have indeed already taken the field, for I came yesterday from Lord Dacre's, in Essex, where I stayed but one night, and am returning to my head-quarters. I found nobody and heard nothing here, but a new rebuff given us by the Americans—I will not tell you where, because geography is not my fort, nor circumstances

my talent; but they have burnt a schooner, and driven General Gage's devils out of a herd of swine, who ran violently into the sea, and lo! is not the place called Hog Island to this day?

Pray, madam, have you read the *Correspondents?* I never heard of the book till two days ago. I think one cannot doubt the letters being genuine; but who has been so cruel as to publish them? and yet, except a little weakness, and it is very little to have but a little, there is nothing that can reflect but on the publishers. Methinks, when it is scandalous to open a private letter, they who publish private letters stand in a very foul predicament, while the authors are living and may be hurt by them. Do not the publishers accuse themselves of robbing or treachery? and by concealing themselves, of a very black design? The publication in question comprehends many of these offences, for it appears by the letters that the authors were much afraid of their being seen, though more goodness of heart appears than anything else. Merciful! if all the foolish things one writes in confidence were to be recorded! For my part I never care how silly I am in my letters, as I trust nonsense carries its own mortality along with it. At least if one is supposed to have common sense, one may trust, as Sir Godfrey Kneller did about his wretched daubings, that people will say, "Oh! to be sure these could not be his." I am not averse to preaching a little on this subject, my lady, because—but somebody knocks. Good morrow, madam.

LETTER LXII.

Strawberry Hill, July 23, 1775.

LADY, thou lettest not thy servant depart in peace! but you must. My pen is truly grown a *grey* goose-quill, and has lost its pith. It never had much imagination, and what it had is gone. Indolence has taken total possession, and comprises my whole story. I have done nothing but bask in the sun, gather hampers of orange-flowers, and enjoy this celestial summer. I believe Joshua has bid the sun stand still, for there has not been a bad day since the first of December. I had rather impute my supineness to this Asiatic season than to the fifty-seven winters I have known; but I must burst my chains and go to Paris, which I doubt I shall not find a *fontaine de Jouvence.*

I have dined at Muswell Hill, and the next day the Beauclercs, Miss Lloyd and I, went to Old Windsor to see poor Mr. Bateman's auction. It was a melancholy sight to me in more lights than one. I have passed many pleasing days there with him and Lady Hervey, and felt additional pain by reflections on my child Strawberry!

All pulled to pieces, and sold by the person he loved and left it to! So was poor Lady Hervey treated! I bought her picture there, left for sale. Indeed Lord Bateman made amends, for he left his own and his house's portraits there too for sale, with a lot of shalots, four acres of beans, and a parcel of human bones! This is a golden age literally, and one should not

wonder if the people sold their children as the Negroes do. I purchased a cargo of ancient chairs, and they at least have found a resting-place in their old age. The Beauclercs and the Virgin returned and passed two days here. On Wednesday I go to Park Place and Nuneham; but I perceive I shall lose my place of gazetteer to your ladyship. Perhaps you will think I am going to have a better, when I tell you an excellent story and quote my author, Lord North. Mr. Cambridge, with all his propensity to credit new-imported marvels, was struck with hearing Mr. Bruce affirm having sent some camels to Abyssinia, and suspended his faith till the fact could be examined. He galloped to Soame Jenyns, and begged to have the registers of exportation in the Board of Trade searched. After some days, Jenyns wrote to tell him that he had scrutinized all the records relating to Philadelphia, Carolina, Virginia, &c. &c., and did indeed find a prodigious number of the species in question had gone to all those provinces, but that they did not spell their names like the *Camels* he wotted of.

Well, madam, if I have moulted my activity, at least my obedience remains in full feather. You say you have written and sealed your justification of yourself and your opinion of the correspondents, but I am sure I have received no such letter. I will say no more on mine; I have no affectation about them; you see I answer the moment I receive yours, and the nonsense in waiting always serves to fill them. If they are preserved, they will prove that I took no care of my

reputation, and that your ladyship had not the best taste in the world in being content with such letters. One comfort the worst writers may have, that, if their follies are handed down, the devil will be in it if any mortal can read a hundred thousandth part of what is written; and it signifies little whether such things are burnt or slumber on the shelves of a library.

LETTER LXIII.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 3, 1775.

I CAN tell your ladyship nothing about *the correspondents* but what I *don't* know, which is what people generally tell.

I did believe the letters genuine, and that they passed between the old lord and his daughter-in-law before she was so. Now it seems the executors deny their authenticity, so I do not believe it any longer, because anybody is at least better authority than everybody; for one person *may* speak truth, which all the world rarely does. I know still less of Lady Luxborough's letters, but expect to be diverted. I remember her wearing her little wizen husband's picture in her great black bush of hair; then she fell in love with Parson Dalton for his poetry, and they rhimed together till they chimed; and then I never saw or heard of her any more, till she revived in Mr. Shenstone's letters, and was a great performer in his ballad 'Arcadia.' I think these materials promise, considering too that

the heroine was sister both of Lord Bolingbroke and Hollis St. John. I expect a mixture of Mrs. Eliza Thomas, Machiavel, and Shuter.

I certainly did not send you, madam, Lady Craven's verses, nor intend it, though they are extremely pretty. She did not give me leave, and without it you know I would not. Nay, I don't think I should even with her permission, for she makes an Apollo of me, and, if the eight other muses called me so too, I would not accept the title without any pretensions.

Tuesday se'nnight is fixed for my voyage. I doubt it will not be in my power to see Ampthill till my return.

I am in great distress, with a near relation dying in my house. You have heard me mention Mrs. Daye: they have let her come from Chichester in the last stage of an asthma and dropsy. I can neither leave her here with only servants, nor know how to convey her back; but I will not disturb your happiness with melancholy stories, madam. For political mishaps, they are very endurable. One loves one's country, but then one takes no more part than comes to the share of an individual; besides, when one has lived a good while, events strike one the less. I have seen my country's barometer up at Minden and down at Derby; I have worn laurels and crackers, and sackcloth and ashes. At last I am grown like sauntering Jack, and bear revolutions with much philosophy:

> My billet at the fire is found,
> Whoever is deposed or crowned;

but I go no farther; one has griefs enough of one's own, without fretting because Cousin America has eloped with a Presbyterian parson.

I have crammed my cloister with three cartloads of lumbering chairs from Mr. Bateman's, and at last am surfeited with the immovable moveables of our forefathers.

Thank you for advising me, madam, not to trust to anybody's love. In good truth I am cured of that as well as of other delusions, and so will Mr. Craufurd be if he lives as long. I hope he will meet me at Paris. I seldom ask him to come hither, because I cannot amuse him, and because he would only disappoint me if he promised to come. There are few I have a better opinion of, or have more good-will to, and he is sure he is welcome whenever he likes to come; but I care so little about the present age, which is all he can care about, that I conclude young people can only be civil, and weary of me, and therefore never press myself upon them.

When I return from Paris I shall have some novelty, and you shall see me as modernized as possible. If Marshal Richelieu has a cask of pink and sable plumes, I will have one too. I will learn to sing the freshest couplets, and will be as accurate as Lady Mary Coke in all the ceremonial of Madame Clotilde's espousals, though I fear the good old form of her going to bed with the ambassador's leg is out of fashion, though a Christian nudity of excellent edification. Well, now we are talking of weddings, &c., I shall take the

liberty of transcribing the following lines, which Lord Huntingdon found on the window of an inn, and gave to Mr. Conway. Some tender swain had written very illegibly his fair one's name in this usual aubergical exclamation :

Adorable Miss Priscilla Plaw !

Another unfeeling savage wrote under,*

* * * * *

I found Lady Jersey at Nuneham, with a pretty little girl, who will be the picture of her father as soon as she cuts her nose, and is bigger already. There was Mr. Whitehead the laureate too, who, I doubt, will be a little puzzled, if he has no better a victory than the last against Cæsar's next birth-day. There was a little too much of the *vertere funeribus triumphos* for a complimentary ode in the last action.

I hear that the Congress have named General Washington generalissimo, with two thousand a year and five pounds a day for his table ; he desired to be excused receiving the two thousand. If these folks will imitate both the Romans and Cromwellians in self-denial and enthusiasm, we shall be horridly plagued with them. Colonel Lee is the third on the staff; I forget the second's name. They say all the regiments in Ireland are going to Boston, and fifty thousand Hanoverians

* The lines which follow are very coarse, and as they appear, by the following letter, to have scandalized his fair correspondent, do not illustrate the state of society in 1775, and would certainly shock that of 1848, I have therefore omitted them.—Ed.

coming to guard Ireland — *c'est un furieux remue-ménage;* but I don't understand these things, and wish your ladyship good night.

LETTER LXIV.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 10, 1775.

If I am become mysterious, madam, I must be grown as old as Methusalem, or by keeping bad company have contracted habits of circumspection, which I always despised.

Is it mystery not to notify royal pregnancies? Consider how *bourgeois* it would be in me to talk of her highness my niece; there is the source of my reserve. Oh! but a babe of Brunswick to be born at Rome! what an event! very well, madam, it will be time enough six months hence to talk of that. For my escape, and the valour of my servant, it is a mystery still to me myself. I believe a man did intend to rob me one morning as I went to Hanworth, because when I ordered my footman to produce a blunderbuss that was under the seat of the chaise, the fellow galloped off; but if David is intituled in any part in this history that I have suppressed, it is for being such a fool as to bid the man follow the chaise when he inquired the way. The whole conduct was my own in this no adventure, which I see has swelled to a magnitude. I had forgotten it, and it certainly was not worth relating; so,

pray your ladyship, let me be restored to my character of indiscreet in your good opinion, or my neighbour Mr. Ellis will come and trust me with some state secret out of the Utrecht Gazette. I have escaped many such sage friends by not reverencing mystery, to the prejudice of my preferment no doubt; but I do not regret my misfortune, though my error is so evident. When Mentor and Sir Richard Lyttelton were lads of fifteen, they were walking in the garden at Hampton Court, with that old driveller Lord Fitzwater. Lyttelton rattled away as usual. As soon as the peer was gone, Master Mentor said to his companion, "Dick, how could you talk so imprudently before a privy councillor!" Could such premature wisdom fail to produce a nurse of future Cæsars? and have not I now proved to your ladyship that you accuse me unjustly of being too cautious?

Apropos, Telemachus was entertained yesterday at Oatlands; the guests besides, were Lord and Lady Holderness, Lord and Lady Hertford, Fitzroy, George Onslow and his wife. It is pity the first glimpse of empire was such a paradise; he will conclude it is Elysium from thence to the Orkneys.

Methinks I in my turn might complain of reserve. *Only two bobbins of gold for your tambour,* and *I had rather be excused more commissions.* I beg you will honour me with any you please; I will not excuse myself, unless they would involve me in a dispute with a Custom-house officer at Dover, and applications afterwards, which I have not spirit to encounter. I pro-

pose being at home the first week in October. Mr. Craufurd and *his lady* and *family*, the papers say, are set out for Spa. Lord and Lady Villiers are going to Vienna, not terrified by the persecutions which were executed on an unhappy princess who twice took the same journey.

As your ladyship was scandalised with the verses,* though I assure you I gave copies to two countesses, who desired to have them, I will now transcribe a more serious tale, which I found the other night in Froissart, and which shews how true gallantry is degenerated. He is speaking of Edward III.'s first expedition to France (I wish I could write the black letter). "They had with them Yonge Bachelars, who had eche of them one of their eyen closed with a peace of sylke. It was sayd, how they had made a vowe among the ladyes of their countrey, that they wolde nat se but with one eye tyll they had done some dedes of armes in Fraunce." Is not it plain, madam, that we were greater heroes when we were in love and hoodwinked, than now that we have no sentiment, and have our eyes broad open?

* See the last letter.

LETTER LXV.

Arlington Street, Aug. 11th.

MR. and *Mrs.* Craufurd are not yet gone. Have you heard that Mrs. St. Jack has declared that if the colonel goes to America, she will accompany him? G. Selwyn says, she will make an excellent *breast-work.* Adieu, madam, I wish you much pleasure, shooting, gold cups, judges, and all the joys the country can afford.

LETTER LXVI.

Roye, Aug. 18, 1775.

THE last paragraph of your letter made me smile, madam. If Colonel Mars were setting out for America with Jove's own thunderbolt in his portmanteau, Venus could not have encouraged him by a more inspiring epistle, so my glory is to redound to your ladyship! Alas! I am grieved to the heart that my journey has been hitherto so tranquil and obscure, that, I doubt, not the reflection of a ray will fall to your ladyship's share. I slipped into Calais with as little *éclat* as a smuggler. No garrison under arms received me, nor commandant conducted me in ceremony to the citadel. In short, the King of France had forgotten to write a postscript in my favour, when he ordered royal honours for my niece; and so, by that neglect, no regard was paid to my avuncular dignity. I was not

very sorry, as walking is not one of my excellences; in my best days Mr. Winnington said I tripped like a peawit; and if I do not flatter myself, my march at present is more like a dabchick's.

I arrived at Dover in such a clear blue evening, and saw the French coast so distinctly, that, had I had but a pair of miracle-shoes, I thought I could have gone over on foot in a quarter of an hour; but I am not going to relate my journey, which was written seven and thirty years ago, and is in point, *v.* Gray's letters. Well! I have not lived so long for nothing; I have at least learnt wit enough not to waste six days between Calais and Paris; but, as Mr. Mason says, I was young and giddy, and thought I had time enough and to spare, which is not quite the case at present. I hope my own biographer will give as good a reason for my being here at all; but that is his business, not mine.

LETTER LXVII.

Paris, Aug. 23.

I SHOULD have a heart of adamant, madam, if I was not become a perfect Frenchman. Nothing could exceed my reception. I do not talk only of my dear old friend, whose kindness augments with the century. The Marechales de Luxembourg and Mirepoix came to Paris to see me; the Duchesse de la Valière met me in the outward room and embraced me. I am smeared with red, like my own crest the Saracen, and, in short,

have been so kissed on both cheeks, that had they been as large as Madam de Virri's, they would have lost leather; but enough of vanity. I have landed on the moment of pomp and diversion. Madame Clotilde was married on Monday morning, and at night was the banquet *roial*,—the finest sight *sur la terre*,—I believe, for I did not see it. I husband my pleasures and my person, and do not expose my wrinkles *au grand jour*. Last night I did limp to the *Bal Paré*, and as I am the hare with many real friends, was placed on the *banc des ambassadeurs*, just behind the royal family. It was in the theatre, the bravest in the universe; and yet taste predominates over expense. What I have to say, I can tell your ladyship in a word, for it was impossible to see anything but the Queen! Hebes and Floras, and Helens and Graces, are street-walkers to her. She is a statue of beauty, when standing or sitting; grace itself when she moves. She was dressed in silver, scattered over with laurierroses; few diamonds, and feathers, much lower than the monument. They say she does not dance in time, but then it is wrong to dance in time. Four years ago I thought her like an English Duchess,* whose name I have forgotten *for some years*. Horrible! but the Queen has had the cestus since. The King's likeness to a Duke, whose name is equally out of my books, remains; and as if there was a fatality that chained the two families together, Madame is as like Lady Georgiana as two peas. As your ladyship and Lord Ossory cannot

* Lady Ossory, formerly Duchess of Grafton.

be so engrossed with gazing on the Queen as I was, you will want to hear more of the Court. I will try what I can remember of it. The new Princess of Piedmont has a glorious face, the rest about the dimensions of the last Lord Holland, which does not do so well in a stiff-bodied gown. Madame Elizabeth is pretty and genteel; Mademoiselle a good figure and dances well. As several of the royal family are *drapés* for the Princess of Conti, there were besides, only, the King's two brothers, the three elder mesdames, the Princess de Lamballe, and the Prince of Conde. Monsieur is very handsome; the Comte d'Artois a better figure and better dancer. Their characters approach to those of two other royal dukes.

There were but eight minuets, and, except the Queen and Princesses, only eight lady dancers. I was not so struck with the dancing as I expected, except with a *pas de deux* by the Marquis de Noailles and Madame Holstein. For beauty, I saw none, or the Queen effaced all the rest. After the minuets were French country dances, much encumbered by the long trains, longer tresses and hoops. As the weather was excessively sultry, I do not think the clothes, though of gauze and the lightest silks, had much taste. In the intervals of dancing, baskets of peaches, China oranges (a little out of season), biscuits, ices, and wine and water, were presented to the royal family and dancers. The ball lasted but just two hours. The monarch did not dance, but for the two first rounds of the minuets even the Queen does not turn her back to him; yet

her behaviour is as easy as divine. To night is a banquet for three hundred persons, given by the Count de Virri, and on Friday he gives a *bal masqué* to the universe in a Colisée erected on purpose. I have excused myself from the first, as I have no curiosity to see how three hundred persons eat, but shall go for a moment to the other *fête*, as nothing but dominos are used, except the grand habit for the dancers. On Saturday is to be acted, in the same great theatre at Versailles, the Connêtable de Bourbon, a new piece by Monsieur Guibert (author of the Tactique), graciously indulged to the Queen, and not to be profaned but there. and at Fontainebleau, *car cela derogeroit;* and, besides, his father is a *vieux militaire*, who would not condescend to hear his son's play read even to the Queen! The Prince de Beauvau is to place me, and there end the spectacles, for Monsieur Turgot is *œconome.*

I am rejoiced, for the heat was so great last night, and I traversed so many corridors, that I would not have so much pleasure often for all the world. Thus, madam, I have given your ladyship a full account of my travels in this my second life; and you are relieved by my letters from England. I cannot help telling you the French are a little amazed at our sacrificing the substance of America to the sovereignty, for they grow as English in their ideas, as we grow French. Well, I will go read our papers, that I may be able to dispute with them.

LETTER LXVIII.

Paris, Sept. 12, 1775.

So they say it was I, madam, who made your ladyship entertain a passion for Lord Ossory! Upon my word, I never suspected before that I was the god of love; nor can I now discover any resemblance between us, unless Le Sage was right when he made the devil *upon two sticks* acknowledge himself for Cupid.

However, as the deed was a good one, and made two persons happier than Venus's son generally does, I am well content to take it upon myself; yet not proposing to be so *convenient* again, I will resign Asmodeo's hop to anybody that likes the profession.

What was in the letter that diverted Lord Ossory, I remember no more than the man in the moon, whose memory lasts but a month. I know, though you are so overbenign to them, madam, that I grow easier about my letters; since they have become so numerous, they must have the fate of a collection that was found last winter at Monsieur de Pondeveylle's: there were sixteen thousand from one lady in a correspondence of only eleven years.

For fear of setting the house on fire if thrown into the chimney, the executors crammed them into the oven. There have been known here persons who wrote to one another four times a day; and I was told of one couple, who being always together, and the lover being fond of writing, he placed a screen

between them, and then wrote to madame on t' other side, and flung them over.

You perceive I had not received your ladyship's when I sent one away yesterday, nor knew you had been dancing a dream with the Duke of Monmouth, who, when he lost his head, never dreamt you would replace it with his cousin's, whose head I am sure I never recommended or commended to anybody.

LETTER LXIX.

September 16.

I WAS interrupted, madam, t' other day, and have not had a moment since to finish my answer, for, as I never come home till morning, I do not rise till evening. Mr. Craufurd is arrived, *though* he did promise to come—to make amends, he has not kept one engagement since. On his way he went to visit the Chatelets, but in a province where they do not live; he has changed his lodgings already, and does not like that which he has got. When he came to Brussels, Sir Something Gordon, our minister, had just shot out both eyes of the Duc d'Aremberg's son, but letters since say he will recover one of them.

Pray assure the Duchess of Marlborough, madam, that I am much flattered by her grace's invitation, and shall certainly obey it. I shall not have an opportunity quite so soon as I intended, having promised to stay here till the 10th of next month—a

promise I already repent, as the weather, with English inconstancy, has changed at once from sultry to extreme cold and deluges of rain.

The charming Queen is gone out of fashion, so I am no longer in love with her. However, as I have not seen another face that is handsomer than a mermaid's at the stern of a ship, my heart is still vacant —in France; and you may have it again, madam, if you are not still dreaming of the Duke of Monmouth, or any of King Charles's breed. If you saw how like this King is to one of them, and what horrid grimaces he makes, I am sure *all my power of description* would not reconcile you to him. Monsieur is very handsome—but somehow or other, I doubt, nobody will fall in love with him. The Comte d'Artois, not so comely, is better made, and having revived the House of Bourbon, is taking true pains to reconcile the ladies to the family. The Duke of Orleans, as they have no longer occasion for his being king, is in a bad way. Madame de Boufflers told us *at supper t'* other night *qu'à sa garderobe il s'étoit passé de la graisse.* I never heard of such a complaint before, and was very glad it was the only one that poor Craufurd, who was present, cannot fancy he has.

Lady Anne's comparison of her father to Maitre Corbeau put me in mind of a very good story, though so old I fear you know it, of a little girl who had confounded her prayers and La Fontaine, and being ordered to repeat the Lord's Prayer in French, began, "*Notre père sur un arbre perché.*" If this is anti-

quated, I have nothing else newer—except that I am violently tempted to stay for Mariette's sale, which they say is to be in November. I have not heard a syllable of news from England since I came hither, my few correspondents being in the country, like your ladyship.

Thank my stars, you cannot commend this letter, madam: I hope it is dull enough to pass with impunity. I should have a fine time of it if I tortured myself to keep up a character! but nobody shall ever catch me at that.

21st.—Lord Duncannon is not gone: my letter has lain by till it is mouldy, but as I have an opportunity of sending it to-morrow, and no time to write another, it must go, superannuated as it is!

LETTER LXX.

Avez vous lu les deux Eloges? Ah! mon Dieu, le petit Cossè est mort; c'est une desolation! Monsieur de Clermont qui vient de perdre sa femme!—eh bien, madame! et Monsieur Chamboneau qui doit reprendre la sienne—mais c'est affreux. Apropos, on dit qu'on vient de nommer deux dames à Madame Elizabeth! si je le sçais! bon; ne voila-t-il pas que je viens de me faire écrire chez Madame de Roncherolles! soupez vous par hazard chez Madame de la Reinière! This is the quintessence, madam, of the present state of Paris, Sept. 9th, 1775, a quarter

before twelve in the forenoon; and if you receive my letter within a week, you may boast of having the freshest and most fashionable intelligence of what was said last night at half-an-hour after eight, in one of the first houses in this capital: not that your ladyship has much claim on my punctuality: I have been here three weeks this blessed day, and you have taken no more notice of me than if I was in Siberia, and were gone out of fashion instead of in. Remember I am out of your jurisdiction, madam; and that *mon cœur* is assailed like *Cithère assiegée*, the subject of the present opera. Lord! how I could brag if I would! Madame de B. told me last night that I had made the *conquète* of her daughter-in-law, la Comtesse Emilie; I am going to drink tea with her under a *bosquet de plumes* this evening, in the mother's English garden at Auteuil, and I am to sup at St. Ouen with Madame Necker, who is reckoned to have condescended more towards me than to any *bel esprit* or *philosophe* since the days of David Hume. It is true, I have hurt myself by speaking a little irreverently of Monsieur Thomas, and by laughing when she told me that Bossuet and the writers under Louis Quatorze had only opened the channels of eloquence which the authors of the present age have made into a perfect bason—but I am always kicking down the pail of my fortune by some indiscretion or other! Well! they are a charming people, and I cannot think of leaving them yet. In England I fancied I was within a furlong of threescore; but it is so En-

glish to grow old! The French are Strulbrugs improved. After ninety they have no more caducity or distempers, but set out on a new career. Madame du Deffand and I set out last Sunday at seven in the evening, to go fifteen miles to a ball, and came back after supper; and another night, because it was but one in the morning when she brought me home, she ordered the coachman to make the tour of the Quais, and drive gently because it was so early.

Do you think, madam, I will come home and have the gout, when I feel myself as young as Nestor when he had just tapped his second century? These good folks push the delusion of life to the last moment. A gentleman here was dying; his wife sent for the notary to make his will; and when it was done, lest the poor man should have a codicil more of affection to make, they supped by his bedside. The notary, *tout plein d'attentions*, filled a bumper and said, "*Madame, à la santé de notre aimable agonizant.*"

Pray tell Lord Ossory, madam, that he would not know Paris, it is so improved in buildings and in good architecture. The Hôtel de la Monnoie on the Quai is very handsome. The École Militaire would be beautiful if the columns were not as short as they are long. I have not yet had time to see the Ecole de Chirurgie, which they say is beautiful, nor the Portail de St. Genevieve, nor the Hôtel du Chatelet, nor the Petite Maison of the Princess of Monaco, but shall next week. There are twenty new streets that are lovely, with arcades and gardens. Mad. de Mirepoix's house, where I sup-

ped last night, is charming. It is on the old Boulevard, the trees of which shade the windows, with the perspective of a street in front. The *salle-à-manger* is all of stucco, highly polished, representing white marble with panels of *verd antique*. The grand cabinet is round, all white and gold and glasses, with curtains in festoons of silk *flambé*, and illuminated by four branches of lilies of or-molu, each as loose and graceful as that which Guido's angel holds in the salutation at the Carmelites, which alas! they have just repainted, as they are serving the whole cloister at the Chartreuse. While we were at supper with all the windows open, and *les Gardes du Roi* playing to us, your ladyship I suppose was hovering over a fire. It has been sultry ever since I came hither; the last five days like the torrid zone, and lightning as cheap as gunpowder.

We are expecting Mr. Craufurd; pray don't send for him to Parliament. In England I conclude you are still talking of Mrs. Rudd and Miss Butterfield, and of the Duchess of Rudd and Butterfield. Well, you may tell me what news you have; I will pretend to care about it, as one does about *les nouvelles de province*. I am very insolent, madam, but at bottom there is a little resentment at not having heard from you.

LETTER LXXI.

Paris, Oct. 3, 1775.

You may be cutting down palm branches, madam, to strew the way, for I am coming. The tempter took

me up into a mountain, and shewed me all Mariette's collection of prints and drawings, which are to be sold in November, and offered me my choice of them if I would stay. I resisted, and prefer myself infinitely to Scipio: he might have had fifty other women; but where is there another room full of Raphaels, Correggios, Parmegianos, and Michael Angelos? Besides, virtue was the *bon ton* in all the *ruelles* in Rome, and it was not *sçavoir vivre* to feel like a man: my continence is unique; who else curbs any passion or withstands any temptation? Did not three monarchs jump at Poland the moment the devil gave them a glimpse of it? Did I learn self-denial *chez nous?* but I will be just, and own that perhaps I have been infected here. *C'est le regne de la vertu;* and I am flying, lest I should be thought Frenchified, if I return with any principles. Messieurs de Turgot and Malesherbes are every day framing plans for mitigating monarchy and relieving the people; and the King not only listens to but encourages them. Their *philosophes* tell folks that the age is enlightened, but don't repeat this, madam; I should be laughed at in England, where we are wiser, and have adopted all the notions which the French are so silly as to relinquish.

However, things do not seem fixed here; there are two parties, if either of which prevailed, Dame Vertu would return to her rags. The charming Queen is eager to reinstate Mons. de Choiseul, and then Madame Gloire would blaze out in full *éclat.* If Monsieur and Madame (the latter a very artful Italian), get the as-

cendant, then the Princess de Marsan (Monsieur's governess) would bring back the Jesuits, persecution, the Church, and the devil knows what—every thing but a Madame du Barry, who must wait for the reign of the Comte d'Artois, till when there will be no naughty doings in this country.

I am going to-night to the Italian comedy with Madame de Mirepoix, to see a new piece, called La Reduction de Paris. I have no idea what it is to be, but shall have time to tell you before I finish my letter. My dear old woman has been dangerously ill, which has confined me above ten days. I carried her yesterday to the new Boulevard to take the air for the first time, and with much difficulty have persuaded her not to sup in the country to-night.

Poor Mr. Craufurd is laid up with the gout, but will not be so long, for in spite of all my wisdom he has sent for a fashionable empiric, who has clapped a plaster to his foot and removed the pain in one night. He consulted an old Duc de Brancas, who was a cripple, and assured him he could already dance a minuet. As I do not want to dance one, I shall not have recourse to the quack, though he should not kill Craufurd. In truth he is, and always will be so unhappy a being, that if I did not love him as much as I do, I should scarce think it kind to dissuade him from anything; but he has so much real worth, and so much good sense, that I preach to him by the hour, though I expect no fruit from my sermons. Madame du Deffand says, one can be but

what one is born: a great affront to me, who pretend to have improved myself exceedingly. She obeys her thesis so well, that she still says and does every thing that comes into her head; and though I have lectured her black and blue about whispering to me in company, it is but two nights ago that she whispered the Bishop of Mirepoix, thinking it was I that sat next to her, about a lady in company, who was sitting over against her, and saw the mistake. You will not believe it perhaps, madam, but here I am thought a miracle of prudence and discretion. Yes, you will; for I recollect your ladyship sometimes upbraids me with those qualities. If I have them, I am sure I am not what I was born, but evil communication corrects *bad* manners.

Now I am quoting holy writ, I will tell you a story from Madame du Deffand. A worthy old gentleman who was ill, made his footman read the Bible to him. Unluckily the man could not read, at least not well. The first sentence he uttered was, "*Dieu apparut à Abimelech en singe.*—"*Comment donc, Butord! que lis tu là?*"—"*Mais, monsieur, je dis que Dieu apparut à Abimelech en singe.*"—"*Dieu apparut en singe!*"—"*Eh bien! Oui, Monsieur, est-ce que Dieu ne peut pas prendre telle forme qu'il lui plait?*" Pray, madam, make Lady Anne observe, how true piety drew edification from the mouth of the poor footman.

I have another very moral tale for Lady Anne, but it is too long for a letter. I hope to find her in danger of a brother. You know I am so angry at her

sister, that I don't even know her name, and regard her as a footman did here, who being sent to inquire after a lady that was brought to bed, and being asked at his return what the child was, said, "*Je ne sçais pas; je sçais que ce n'est pas un garçon.*"

P. S. Huge news!—yet not quite ripe. Monsieur de Choiseul is come suddenly to Paris. They say he goes back on Saturday, but his friends look in great spirits; and as the Queen has lately committed some acts of authority, and as Madame de Marsan has retired without a pension, the family-compact—but perhaps your ladyship had rather hear about *la Reduction de Paris.* It is a comic opera, and yet as dismal as George Barnwell. Henry IV. does nothing but utter maxims and sentences: in the first scene arrives a dame with a helmet on, a spear and shield, and one leg bare. I concluded it was Joan of Arc, but it proved to be a Dame de Chatillon, who sings a catch to persuade his majesty to put every living soul to the sword, as *le brave* La Noue does another about *la loi fondamentale.* In short, the nation has jumbled itself into such a hodge-podge of philosophy, which they set to music, and of eloquence, which they dress with all sauces, that their productions are monsters of pedantry. I have not met with a page that is worth bringing you. The Academy of Marseilles have given for their next subject, the *Eloge* of Madame de Sevigné. How the good soul would stare if she knew it! Adieu, madam, and adieu, Paris!

LETTER LXXII.

Arlington Street, Oct. 17, 1775.

Princess, in spite of fortune, fate, and chance,
I 'm once again returned to you from France.

I WILL not maintain, madam, that this couplet is absolutely stolen out of any French play, but it is so like the *début* of many of their tragedies, that I think it could not have come into my head if I had not remembered it. Whether it is Racine's or not, it suits my purpose so exactly, that I could not help employing it, and I beg your ladyship will believe the sentiment sincere, though couched in poetry. I will not quote Virgil for the circumstance of my journey, for I was much more *terris jactatus* than *alto;* the roads were very rough, but the sea so smooth that it cost fifteen hours to pass from Calais to Dover, what wind there was being perfectly neuter. However, here I am, and as my motto says, ever yours, &c.

P. S.—My letter concluded so happily, that though professional and civil conclusions are totally out of fashion, I could not help ending there; but to take off the formality, I add a few words; and to tell you I have bought your two bobbins and a bit of china; no, it is not come, but I hope will, and will be a great rarity; for to my sorrow I did not know that last year's act, to favour the Bristol manufacturer, laid a duty of one hundred and fifty per cent. on French china, and I paid at Dover seven guineas and a-half, for a com-

mon set of coffee things that had cost me but five. As I came but this morning, I have not time to add more, though I would not let the newspaper have the pleasure of telling you that I was arrived.

P.S.—I left poor Mr. Craufurd flayed alive, that is, his foot—I never saw so horrid a sight. The quack brought off the whole coat of his foot at once, and it looks like a leg anatomized and thrown on a dunghill; yet the man had made him walk a mile on it the day before I set out. My Lord Lovat might as well have put on a cravat after his head was off.

LETTER LXXIII.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 21, 1775.

I COULD tell you, madam, when the moon will change, but not when Mr. Craufurd will set out. Poor soul! I do not guess when he will be able; but, perhaps, he will attempt it for variety. However, pray write to him; it will be kind, and direct it to Mr. Panchaud. If your letter misses him there will be no great harm, as I suppose you will not tell him any great secrets.

For my visiting Ampthill just now, it is totally impossible. I have run strangely in debt to my own business, and find my hands full. I had left a purchase or two here unfinished. My poor sister, Mrs. Daye is dead, and I have her affairs to settle. General Cholmondeley has made me one of his executors, and

though I shall give up that charge, I must give it up, and must go to town to-morrow upon it. I have commissions from France to execute; and, in short, have such a jumble of two nations in my head, that I want a few days of entire repose, before I shall get into my common sense again. Besides, come to Ampthill! Why is not your ladyship coming to town? I will not deliver a bobbin but in Seymour-place, nor make a visit farther out of town.

LETTER LXXIV.

Arlington Street, Nov. 9, 1775.

You say ironically, madam, that I do not think at all about politics. I object to the expression, more than to the purport of that phrase, if you mean by it that I am eager. The truth is, I think too seriously on our present situation to be eager. Eagerness implies hopes—and I have none. I think this country undone, almost beyond redemption. Victory in any war but a civil one fascinates mankind with a vision of glory. What should we gain by triumph itself? Would America laid waste, deluged with blood, plundered, enslaved, replace America flourishing, rich, and free? Do we want to reign over it, as the Spaniards over Peru, depopulated? Are desolate regions preferable to commercial cities? But if the Provincials conquer, are they, like lovers, to kiss and be friends? Who are the heroes, where are the statesmen, that

shall restore us to the position in which we stood two years ago?

These reflections fill me with melancholy, not with ardour. My pride, as an Englishman, is hurt. I often go to France without loving that country, and I know with indignation, I saw with indignation, that they exult in our blunders and absurdity. We have already saved them more than half the labour of the next war, and shall bring it on as soon again as it would have come. *Then* will the ministers triumph? *Then* will begging another peace avail? Perhaps I am foolish to feel all this. Young men that must live to see it would have reason to be hurt, if young men were so ill-employed as to anticipate the vexations of age. I probably have little time to be witness to the humiliations that are approaching. Father Paul's *esto perpetua!* was more the prayer of a good man, than of a wise one. Countries are but great families, that rise from obscurity to dignity and then degenerate. This little island, that for many centuries was but a merchant, married a *great fortune* in the last war, got a title, grew insolent and extravagant, despised its original counter, quarrelled with its factors, kicked its plebeian wife out of doors, and thought, by putting on an old red coat, to hector her relations out of the rest of her fortune, which remained in their hands as trustees. Europe, that was jealous of this upstart captain's sudden rise, encouraged him in his folly, in hopes of seeing him quite undone. End of volume the first. The second part is in the press.

News of to-day.—The Duke of Grafton dismissed.

News of to-morrow.—Lord George Germaine, Secretary of State.

No news.—Lord Lyttelton to have a place.

I have been in pain for the Duke of Gloucester; but, as no account has come since last Friday, I flatter myself he is out of danger, his disorder being the same as he had before when last at Florence, and which would either have carried him off soon, or must have been stopped by the bark, as I trust it has been. But I am prepared against all events: time is a great philosophizer. You say you augur so ill, madam, that you will not be scandalized at the gravity of my letter. Mine take their complexion from the colour of the hour, and, as cheerfulness oftenest predominates in me, I shall laugh again. It is very hard if they who are innocent of their country's ruin may not smile, as well as they who are guilty of it. I can conceive why Cæsar should have cut his own throat, but I never understood why Cato did.

LETTER LXXV.

Arlington Street, Nov. 18, 1775.

Be perfectly at ease and happy, our lady! for our lord spoke with modesty, decency, dignity, sense, and conviction. He regretted being forced to quit his friends, though not so much as they regret his quitting them: all this I firmly believe, for I know no-

thing of the matter, having gone out of town yesterday, and being but this minute returned.* I do know he spoke, for he told me so himself when I called yesterday to leave your cup with him; but as he is the last man in the world to commend himself, he would not tell me a syllable, but that he soon recovered the first awful moment of hearing his own voice in a dead silence. I will answer for all the rest. He said his brother spoke charmingly, and Charles Fox better than ever. He made such a pathetic *éloge* of the two brothers that every feeling eye was in tears. I am going about the town to hear all their praises, but I must not expect them in some houses. Oh! *notre dame,* give us a son and heir! I would vow a silver babe to Loretto, if that would do.

LETTER LXXVI.

Nov. 23, 1775.

As the two ladies must be very angry at Lord O., I am not much surprised, madam, that they impute his desertion to you. They must both think it a great reflection on a man's understanding to be governed by his wife; and to charge it on your ladyship, is to depreciate *him.* In truth, when one can fix the

* I cannot understand this account, Lord Ossory voted for the motion of Mr. Burke, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill for composing the present troubles, and for quieting the minds of his Majesty's subjects in America; so did Mr. Fitzpatrick, so did Mr. Fox, all Lord Ossory's friends, on Nov. 16.—Ed.

blemish of madness on Mr. Crewe, only to keep another nephew from making him a visit, one must have very little charity for one's neighbour. However, be easy, madam; I dare to say they will make Lord Ossory amends by offering to buy him off, and if they could disgrace him in that manner, they would perfectly forgive him. The speeches have given me additional pleasure, as I hear a third aunt, who is not displeased at them, was told (before they spoke) that they were men of no consequence but from being her nephews. I hope they will keep up their own importance, or they will be swallowed up in Lord George's fame, who engrosses all tongues. He puts me in mind of some lines written by Lord Lansdowne, when prisoner in the Tower, in the same room where my father had been confined; the last verse was,

Some fall so hard, they bound and rise again.

I think nobody can doubt of Lord George's resolution, since he has exposed himself to the artillery of the whole town. Indeed I always believed him brave, and that he sacrificed himself to sacrifice Prince Ferdinand.

I wish I could tell you anything but politics, madam, politician as you are christened by your godmothers; but one hears nothing else. On Sunday night, indeed, I was singularly entertained at Monsieur de Guines's, who gave a vast supper to the Prince of Hesse and the Goddesses most in fashion, as the Duchess of Devonshire, Lady Sefton, &c. We were

twenty-eight at supper; but before it, a Monsieur Tessier, of whom I have heard much in France, acted an entire play of ten characters; and varied his voice, and countenance, and manner, for each so perfectly, that he did not name the persons that spoke, nor was it necessary. I cannot decide to which part he did most justice, but I would go to the play every night if I could see it so acted.

I have heard to-day that your ladyship has not the sole honour of perverting Lord Ossory. *I* am said to be the serpent that whispered Eve; and should be proud of it, if both imputations were not affronts to Lord Ossory's understanding, who will do me the justice to allow that I had so much more respect for it, that I never had the impertinence of his angry friends to imagine he was to be led; a civility for which he is not much obliged to them. Nor do they know how very seldom I see him, though I am so much in his way wherever he goes. It is an additional reason for my wishing your ladyship in town, that I should see him sometimes. My poor old Lady Blandford is dying; she fell down on Monday and broke her thigh —at 78!

P. S.—As I was going to seal my letter, I received your ladyship's thanks for the cup, which indeed did not deserve that you should give yourself so much trouble on purpose. You have always been so good to me, madam, and I am so grateful that if my *souvenirs* were marked with cups, there would be many more than mile-stones from hence to Ampthill.

LETTER LXXVII.

December 4, 1775.

I PERCEIVED I had not heard from your ladyship for some time, but your silence would not have occasioned mine, if I had known anything worth telling you. I have not the talent of my brethren, the gazetteers, who always learn a sheet full of news, whether anything happens or not; but then they have a crop of debates. I believe nobody in London knows so little of what passes in Parliament as I do. Mr. Ackland had run his head against Charles Fox, a week before I heard of it. The town is beautified with four-score knights, of new or old Scotia, in yellow ribbons, and yet I have not seen one of them. How should I see or know anything? I seldom stir out of my house before seven in the evening, see very few persons, and go to fewer places, make no new acquaintance, and have seen most of my old, wear out. Loo at Princess Amelie's, loo at Lady Hertford's, are the capital events of my history, and a Sunday alone, at Strawberry, my chief entertainment. All this is far from gay; but as it neither gives me *ennui*, nor lowers my spirits, it is not uncomfortable, and I prefer it to being *déplacé* in younger company. My greatest objection is, that it often makes me a very unentertaining correspondent at Ampthill; but this is almost as dull a season of the year as autumn. I would promise it should mend after Christmas, but happily

you will be in town then, and I shall pass my time more agreeably, and have no occasion to write.

I am very sorry Lady Holland is out of order, I hope not at all seriously, and that you have no occasion to be in the least alarmed. The sale at Holland House will produce treasures. I did not go : it would have been a horrid sight to me who have lived there so much, but I hear the most common furniture has sold as dear as relics.

There is another thing concerns me too, Sir George Macartney's voyage to the government of the Grenades. There is nobody who is merely an acquaintance that I should regret more. He is extremely good-humoured, equal, conversable on all subjects, unaffected, and perfectly agreeable in great or small companies. Methinks it would be very just to write a North Briton against Lord Bute for doing *so little* for his own son-in-law.

It is a little late in my letter to express my grief for your ladyship's—what disorder? You have not told me, only that it is a sort of influenza; so I have a proportionate sort of concern. It would be very inconvenient to me to be much afflicted just now for any thing, for the King of Prussia is dying. I would venture to rejoice even if I were his subject, for a worse Dionysius cannot succeed.

Pray, madam, tell the nymphs of Ampthill that if I had a spark of imagination left it should be at their service; but old people do nothing but tell old stories, far from inventing new. The only thing I would ever allow myself to write more, should be like Brantome;

but as every body's history in these days is written in newspapers or magazines, my trouble is luckily saved, and for any thing else, it is a maxim of mine that old folks ought to do nothing at all, for nothing becomes them. I am very strict to this rule, and, if I ever break it, set it down that I begin to dote.

Tuesday.

I have just sent to Lady Holland, who has had a good night, and is much better.

LETTER LXXVIII.

Dec. 20, 1775.

I COULD not write sooner, madam, for though I certainly have as little real business as any Christian in England, so it happens that nobody is more employed. On Monday and Tuesday I wrote eight letters, and one of them was of seven pages; but it was a letter that I hope will save me a vast many. Sir Horace Mann's elder brother is dead, the estate comes to him, and I flatter myself that a regular correspondence of thirty-four years will cease, and that I shall see him again before we meet in the Elysian fields. Antiquaries write to me too. I hoped I had done with them, but they are *still harping on my daughter*,—the old story, Richard the Third. I laugh at them as civilly as I can, yet they return to the charge. Then I am mighty busy about Mariette's sale, where I have been so lucky as to ruin myself. I have got Madame d'Olonne; Ma-

dame Du Deffand says I have paid dearer for her than any of her lovers did in her life time. Item: a little bust of Nic. Poussin's wife by him in *terra cotta*, and a book of portraits in the reigns of Francis I. and Henry II., that belonged to Brantome, who has written the names; and among them is Diane de Valentinois. It is droll that even Madame d'Olonne is *en Diane*. A few days before the sale the King of France offered 300,000 livres for the whole collection: it was refused, and has not produced so much, though my correspondent, the auctioneer, says every thing sold for three times what it was worth. You may imagine, madam, I shall be in a fine taking till my old concubines arrive.

You ask me what I think of the Earl of F——, and the Irish Baroness? I answer, nothing; for I don't know who they are, unless they are Lord Farnham and Lady Clermont; and then I shall ask why they have stayed fifty years before they thought of one another? For the other Irish baroness, Lady Luxborough, she had a mishap with Parson Dalton, the reviver of Comus, and retired to a hermitage on Parnassus, as she says herself. The seraphic duchess, her friend, was suspected to have *chassé sur les mêmes terres*, and so it is no wonder they were intimate as they agreed *in eodem tertio*.

You ask me another question, that I wish I could answer to my own satisfaction, and as gratefully as your ladyship's goodness deserves: why I should not come to Ampthill this Christmas? I might plead, if I wished

only for a decent excuse, that I have promised, if I go any where, to go to Park Place; or that Mr. Mann's death detains me, for he held our place for Sir Edward and me, and there is much to settle. But, alas! there is a worse reason: I am not young enough to fly about in dark cold days, and have an inward foe, whom I dare not provoke and rouse; and who, if in one of his moods, would make me as tiresome to my hosts as to myself. In one's latter days one must take care not to give one's friends any thing but one's best moments, and yet, I don't know but with all my prudent maxims, I may venture to come to you for a day or two. I have a vast mind, and a colt's tooth I see the discreetest of us never sheds. Don't expect me; but Lord knows what may happen!

The newspapers, as soon as I could have done, told you what a fib the Gazette told about Canada on Saturday night. Faces, that are generally pretty round, lengthened to their shoe-strings on Sunday. By Monday evening the Cabinet determined to—seem to recover their spirits, and so though they believed every tittle of the intelligence, they pretend not to believe a word of it. Lady Mary Coke, who is in no secrets, declaimed on the misfortune at Princess Amelie's, and said how dreadful it was for people to fall into the hands of people who tear people's eyes out! I smiled: she grew more incensed, and said she was sure I was glad. I said, I was comforted, as I heard they put people's eyes in again; at least, I concluded so, as nobody has returned without his eyes. In good truth I think we

are pulling out our own eyes, and nobody seems to have a nostrum for putting them in again.

The duchess cannot be tried till February, for it is recollected that Westminster Hall is a common into which all sorts of cattle must be admitted in term-time. Lady Luxborough has exhausted all artful conclusions of letters, so I will never more be your ladyship's most devoted.

P.S. They say Mrs. Rudd has been at the play in Lord Lyttelton's chariot. If the duchess is acquitted, I suppose he will take her into keeping too, to shew he is convinced of *her* virtue also, and wronged her innocence.

LETTER LXXIX.

Dec. 27, 1775.

FRESH, very fresh news! General Carleton is not come, but General Burgoyne is, though not yet landed in town. He is to bring very good accounts from Boston; but as he does not yet know what till he is told by those he is to tell, and as I am too scrupulous to send any news before it is born, you will excuse my mentioning the particulars.

We believe Quebec is perfectly safe, though we know to the contrary. Adam Smith told us t'other night at Beauclerc's, that Major Preston, one of two, but he is not sure which, would have been an excellent commander some years hence if he had seen any ser-

vice. I said it was pity the war had not been put off till the major should be some years older.

Lord Granby was married last night. He is selling an estate of 3,000*l.* a-year that came to him by his mother, to pay his father's debts. I am afraid he will never sell himself.

Here are some verses* of Soame Jenyns, that, in our present want of comfort, we admire very much, for we are out of spirits, and so was the poet, too, when he wrote the last stanza, which is insufferably bad. Pray return the piece, for I have no copy, and my amanuensis is in the country. There are some better verses by Dean Barnard, of which I will procure a copy if I can. They are an answer to a gross brutality of Dr. Johnson, to which a properer answer would have been to fling a glass of wine in his face. I have no patience with an unfortunate monster trusting to his helpless deformity for indemnity for any impertinence that his arrogance suggests, and who thinks that what he has read is an excuse for everything he says.

I told you, madam, I might be busy if I would. I am so whether I will or not. The absence of Sir Horace Mann has embarrassed me, as he is not here to be admitted to the place which his brother held by patent for my brother and me. It involves me with the treasury, but as I am the most respectful and cheapest person they can deal with, I have submitted everything to them, and only begged they will give me nothing for my pains,—which will content me at least.

* The verses are not with the letter.—Ed.

I shall go to Strawberry to-morrow, unless I hear their pleasure; and have told Mr. Fitzpatrick that I think of meeting him next week at Ampthill; but I don't tell your ladyship so, for indeed I know nothing of the matter.

Just at present I suppose I am the vainest creature in the universe. Lady Di. has drawn three scenes of my Tragedy, which, if the subject were a quarter as good as the drawings, would make me a greater genius than Shakspeare, as she is superior to Guido and Salvator Rosa. Such figures! such dignity! such simplicity! Then there is a cedar hanging over the castle, that is more romantic than when it grew on Lebanon!

Oh! if Lord Ossory has a farthing in the world to spare, he may buy a Madonna and child, by Vandyke, at Christie's, for four thousand guineas, for which I would not give four hundred if I were as rich as General Scott. It is a fine picture, and yet I believe Vandyke was the father no more than Joseph.

LETTER LXXX.

Calais, le 26 April, 1776.

MA CHERE AMIE,

J'AI l'honneur de vous annoncer que les *Pères* ont decidez que la sentance de la Cour Chrêtienne ne devoit pas justifier le mariage que j'ai contracté avec le Duc de Kingston. Ils ont dishonnerez la Cour Ecclesiastique dont les dogmes ont été suivis inviolablement pendant 1475 annécs. En detruisant cette

cour de justice je suis la malheureuse sacrifice, mais ils ne peuvent enlever mon bien, ils n'ont pas ordonner pour me punir que de leur faire la reverence. Ce fut tout pour le public, mais vis-à-vis de vous, ma chere amie, je vous confesse que je reste dans un étonnement sans egale. L'ame frémit contre l'injustice, qu'on ma faite. J'espère que si vous voulez penser à moi, vous serez persuadée que j'ai resistée pendant 20 années à accepter la main du Duc de Kingston. Scachant que le Comte de Bristol d'à present, autrefois Mr. Hervey, pretendoit avoir des droits sur moi, je ne l'auroit pas dans un age plus avancé risquée, j'ai donc pris le parti de me marier qu'avec la pernission de l'archevêque et la sentance de la Cour Ecclesiastique que j'ai en l'honneur de vous montrer.

Mon intention estoit pour le moins aussi bonne que mon sort est malheureux. Je suis donc, ma chère amie, dans la Cour Ecclesiastique reconnue pour Duchesse de Kingston, avec les *Pères* comme Comtesse de Bristol. En ligne directe de ma propre maison il y a 350 ans, et pour les pas je les ayant toujours cedez à ceux qui vouloit les accepter—la grandeur et les richesses ne sont pour moi que des embarras.

Je vous embrasse, et je suis de cœur et d'ame,
ma chère amie, toujours à vous.

ELIZABETH,
DUCHESSE
DE KINGSTON.*

* The spelling of this letter is as in the original, which is in Kirgate's handwriting. There is no address.—ED.

Aussitot que la sentance fut passeé je me suis embarqué pour Calais, car ces bons messieurs avoient desin de me retenir en Angleterre par un loi qu'on nomme a *ne exeat regno*, mais m'étant sauvé il n'est plus question de ce malheur la! Je vous prie d'assurer le Prince Connestable de mes respects, and de même au deux Princes Cardinaux.

LETTER LXXXI.

Arlington Street, June 20, 1776.

If one could resign one's place, without being supposed going into opposition, I should certainly ask my sovereign lady's leave to quit the office of gazetteer; and my motion would be as singular as my practice. Incapacity is my plea, and age the cause. It is a young world, and I neither live in it, nor am acquainted with it. I know nothing worth knowing, I do nothing worth doing—of what can I write? My old friends die off, I cannot make new, for the fewer ties one has to a world one is going to leave, the better. I have been almost alone at Strawberry ever since your ladyship left town. I came yesterday, and return to morrow. Had there been any news, I should have heard—nay, perhaps I did, for I called at Mr. Beauclerc's in the evening, where I found Lord Pembroke, Lord Palmerston, Garrick, Burke, the Dean of Derry, Lord Robert Spenser, and Mr. Gibbon; but they talked so loud, (not the two last) and made such a noise, and Lord Palmerston so much more noise with

trying to talk, that it was impossible to know what they said, under the distance of a mile from them. All I did learn was, that Miss Vernon is not married. I should be very angry if she was, and you had said nothing of it; and that another lady who has been on the brink of marrying as many dukes as the Duchess of Argyll, is not yet Lady Maynard. It is pity; she deserves a peerage as much as most that have got them lately. The Binghams are incog. at Paris; their letters of recommendation announced them as my Lord and my Lady Lucan, and the patents are still wind-bound.

I smiled at your ladyship's orders, but I think the person you gave me charge of, is in no danger of what you apprehend, unless for debt.

To make this a decent letter, I shall transcribe some lines that I found on my table on Sunday night. I had dined at Lady Blandford's, and the Beauclercs with Mr. Gibbon and Monsieur le Texier had been to drink tea with me in the mean time. The last wrote these lines in a moment, and they are certainly good for impromptus,—

Si vous aviez scû qu'aujourdhui
Dût venir dans votre *castel*
La plus aimable mylady,
Qui n'a nulle autre en son pareil;
Vous n'auriez bougé du céans,
Et sans courir la pretontaine,
Vous auriez attendé cent ans
Plutôt que perdre telle aubaine.
Pourtant dans icelle visite
Nous serions bien désappointé
Sans la bonne Dame Marguerite,
Qui nous a fait d'excellent thé.

Elle a suspendu nos regrets,
Et nous a prouvé comme un livre,
Par ses soins et son sçavoir vivre,
Qu'à tels maitres sont tels valets.

I am to have Mr. Essex to-morrow from Cambridge, to try if he can hang me on any where another room for Lady Di's drawings. I have turned the little yellow bed-chamber below stairs into a beauty room, with the pictures I bought, along with the Cowley, at Mr. Lovibond's sale, but I could not place the drawings there, because I will have a sanctuary for them, not to be shewn to all the profane that come to see the house, who in truth almost drive me out of my house. Adieu, madam, remember this is summer, and that I am Methusalem. He left off writing news when he was past an hundred.

LETTER LXXXII.

Strawberry Hill, June 25, 1776.

I ASSURE you, my dear madam, that it is no idleness that dictates my excuses. It would be my greatest satisfaction to be able to entertain every minute you could bestow on me; nor is my nature idle; but my summers are so solitary, or passed in such insipid company, my age weans me so much from the young and active world, and I care so little what it does, that I cannot write letters, without feeling that they want an apology. When I find I grow old, would it not be strange vanity to imagine that others do not

perceive it? I never had parts that could afford to be diminished, and it is honest to give one's friends warning when the crack is begun. But I hate to talk of myself, even on the depreciating side, though much more excusable than its contrary. I have given you notice: you shall know every thing I hear worth telling you; but I cannot make brick with my Lady Greenwich's gazettes.

I am extremely pleased with the new Countess of Warwick, though I think the earl might have made a more suitable match without wandering out of the family. I can easily conceive why a notable aunt did not think so. Before your ladyship's letter arrived, I had heard of a mysterious and very private party on the water, which left me no doubt. There was only Lady Notable, Miss Vernon, the Earl, and his brother. On perceiving they were seen, the ladies held down their heads, and Miss Vernon landed with her hood quite down over her face. How certain should we be of governing the peer, if we could have persuaded him to steal his bride! for you know, madam, one always governs those one has cunningly made marry. Pray continue your goodness to the two other sisters, that they may spitefully be matched to dukes; or was it to shew more consummate address than another protectress? Forgive me if I suspect that it was not mere kindness to the bride that operated the service, though I hope it will prove real happiness to her, who is so intituled to it.

I heard t'other day from very good authority, that

all Ireland is *America mad*—that was the expression. It was answered, *so is all the Continent.* Is it not odd that this island should, for the first time since it was five years' old, be the only country in Europe in its senses?

The case is, England was never governed by Scotland before, where a very profound author has pronounced the wisest heads in Christendom grow; and yet the Scots do not love that author with all his impartiality. Yours, Madam, &c.,

DUNCE SCOTUS.

P.S. I have just been told a good story of the Duchess of Queensberry. She dined at the Dean of Lincoln's with much company. After dinner, the ladies retiring, found themselves shut into a drawing-room without any convenience, and with but one door. When they could keep their patience no longer, the duchess, opening the door into the parlour, said, "Mr. Dean, you have given us an admirable dinner, good wine, and an excellent dessert, but you must remember that we are not residentiaries."

I enclose * a letter of another duchess, which is not much inferior to her epistle to Foote. I believe you may trust to its being genuine, for I received it from Italy.

My lock of hay begs its respects to your hay mountains, and hopes they are in a fair way.

2nd P.S. Though your ladyship would persuade me to cast my slough, I assure you I am not without

* Not with the papers.—ED.

flatterers of another sort, who encourage me in my Tom-Hearnality. I have just received a poem called Wittenham Hill, in which I am hailed as a father of ancient lore,

> What means (O! for a Walpole's antique skill!)
> What means the milk-white cross on yonder hill?

I can but laugh at my own party-coloured life—sometimes at Paris, and an editor of Grammont; sometimes playing all night at pharoah with Madame de Mirepoix, or at loo with a greater favourite; now writing fables for Lady Anne, and verses for the Graces; then accused as a plotting Republican; while, at best, the truth is, as I told the late Lord Holland when I set up my printing press,

> Some have for wits, and then for poets past,
> Turned printers next, and prov'd plains fools at last.

3rd P.S. They are so amazed and charmed at Paris with Lady Bingham's miniatures, that the Duke of Orleans has given her a room at the Palais-Royal to copy which of his pictures she pleases. The Queen, on the Duc d'Aiguillon's losing his only daughter, begged of the King to permit him to go wherever he pleases, except to Court, with positive command never to appear there. This shews her Majesty's power; and Mr. Falkener who has just returned from Italy through France, told me last night, that it is generally believed M. de Choiseul will be replaced; that they have thirty-six ships ready, and are even pressing carpenters into the service. What a prospect! Who will at last be the America-mad!

4th P.S. Pray do not give a copy of the Duchess's letter; for I have no ill-will to her, and do not want to spread her follies.

LETTER LXXXIII.

Strawberry Hill, July 10, 1776.

WARS and rumours of wars! Is your Bedfordshire militia ready, madam? The Duc de Chartres is at Cales, and even the stocks, who hitherto have been as dull as the country gentlemen, begin not to like it. The Duke of Richmond, who is returned, thinks Maurepas will keep off the war as long as he can, and yet the duke owns the preparations are prodigious; and that Spain has insisted on this armament. Do they humour her in an armament, and yet mean nothing by it? Where have we an army, except of Irish peers?

When is Henrietta * to take possession of Warwick Castle? Is a Dun cow to be roasted whole, or boiled in Guy's caldron? Lady Powis is gone for such an exploit on her son's coming of age. This is all I know upon earth, but that my hay is a perfect water souchy, and my roses and orange-flowers all drowned; and I am such a heathen, that I am more sorry for my nosegays than my revenue. Have you had but a patriot court? that is, a thin one? You see I am disposed, madam, to pay my *quitrents*, though I have but a pepper-corn; but we that know nothing, can say nothing. Jemmy

* The eldest Miss Vernon.—ED.

Brudenel no doubt can write volumes full of matter, happy man, say I.

> He dwells amidst the royal family, and can
> Of *all* our Edwards, *all* our Henrys talk;

of whom, thank Heaven! there is a tolerable quantity. I shall be much better company when the French land; though as I have a little money in the stocks, to be sure it will not be very pleasant. Adieu! madam, write to me, that I may have something to answer at least.

LETTER LXXXIV.

Arlington Street, July 13, 1776.

When the wind blows, wait for the Echo. If your lady believes all you read in the papers, I humbly pity you. Instead of crediting a quarter, I have the honour to think that there is little but lies in the accounts from America. I see regiments and ships sending every day, as if the ministers thought they had not yet half force enough there, though by their own accounts the business will be over before those that are going can pack up a night cap. Instead of the war being near at an end, I believe we are going to have two more; and as our army is in America, I hope France and Spain will be so punctilious as to go thither after it. If they have not given assurances they will, there does not seem much sense in sending every man out of the kingdom, unless as an excuse for non-resistance. However, as nothing is so fallible as conjectures built

on reasoning, I choose to pin my faith on firmer ground. I dreamt that Lord Guilford was sent to the Congress, that the leaders immediately accepted pensions and Irish peerages, and that their wives instantly hoisted pyramids of feathers on their heads to shew that their hearts were entirely English. I give you my word this dream is true, and I prefer it to the Gazette itself.

Thus much for my political faith: now to answer your questions, madam. What am I doing? Strictly speaking, nothing: yet according to the expressive old adage, I am as busy as a hen and one chick. I am obeying the Gospel, and putting my house in order, am ranging my prints and papers, am *composing* books, in the literal sense, and in the only sense I will compose books any more. I am pasting Henry Bunbury's prints into a volume; and as man is a contradiction, I am setting my house in order against I leave it—and yet am building a new room. I do not go to Bristol, for Lady Laura is recovered, and I shall go for a few days to Brighthelmstone, because I am not recovered, and want the sea air to recover that strength I never had, and is not all returned. Surely there is enough of myself!

Truly I know not whether the young Prince is inoculated or not. I suppose, as Pope says of Selkirk, *if I live I shall love him*, but as yet he has not taken up an inch in my thoughts, which have vast difficulty in extending their affections to babes and sucklings. Even princes of fourteen do not enter into my litany. And this leads to another of your ladyship's questions.

Windsor is not the great castle, but its footstool, the small house where Queen Anne used to take a cheerful glass with Lady Masham. It is whispered that change of air has been recommended. Nay, the lookers-out are full of I know not what visions, presented to their wicked imaginations by certain rays that have flashed out of the cloud that lately hung over the A-B-C-dario. *Bon mots* are quoted worthy of young Ammon in his nonage. Another chimera is, that there is a visible atrophy and wasting. Now for my part, I am determined not to build any views on a fourth reign, like those late seers the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Bolingbroke; because, if I should have the misfortune to survive to that period, I should probably be as much a child, as I was when I was presented to George I., and therefore I declare I will never hear a word of politics under George IV.

I came to town last night on a little business, and return to-morrow. The Duchess of Bristol was seen yesterday in this very town. More this deponent saith not.

One word more, on our old quarrel, and I have done. *Such letters* as mine! I will tell you a fact, madam, in answer to that phrase. On Mr. Chute's death, his executor sent me a bundle of letters he had kept of mine, for above thirty years. I took the trouble to read them over, and I bless my stars they were as silly, insipid things, as ever I don't desire to see again. I thought when I was young and had great spirits, that I had some parts too, but now I have seen

it under my own hand that I had not, I will never believe it under any body's hand else; and so I bid you good night.

LETTER LXXXV.

Strawberry Hill, July 17, 1776.

THE inclosed is a charming copy of verses of Voltaire, at least the first part, and sent *bien son ancienne verve.* What a beautiful and pathetic line is

Rit des calamités dont pleurent les *provinces,*

and how applicable in every Paris! and how applicable just now!

This is not my only business, madam; I beg you will send me a recommendatory letter to Mons. Hubert for Mr. Hardinge, Lord Camden's nephew, who is going a trip to Geneva. You may truly say he is a very clever, amiable young man, a rising chancellor, if the amiable were rising to be chancellors; and if you like to exaggerate, you may add that he will taste and understand Mons. Hubert, neither of which I believe, no more than if he was the present chancellor; and yet he has taken to me, who am as unlike any thing he has seen at the Temple or on the circuit, as Mons. Hubert, with much less talents. No matter; pray oblige me.

I dined yesterday with Princess Amelie, with the Lords and Ladies Holdernesse, Spencer, Weymouth, the Lords Hertford and Ashburnham, the Ladies Anne

* Not enclosed with the letters.—ED.

Howard, Mary Coke, and Margaret Compton, Mrs. Howe, and Mr. Morrice. We had the finest fruit in the world, I mean in a world where there is fifty times more rain than sun, very little wine, and three long pools at commerce; you may guess if Lord Weymouth was well diverted. Lord and Lady Carmarthen were to have been there, but the Duchess of Newcastle has had a stroke of apoplexy, and lies senseless. As I came home, two footpads just at the entrance of my own Twickenham, stepped up to my footman on horseback, damned him and bid him stop. Luckily it was not David, but the young fellow, who rode up to the coachman, and bid him drive on; and so we shall not make a paragraph in the newspapers. I expected to hear a pistol calling after us, but the lad saw nothing but a large stick, which one of them held up at him. I shall not send him to America after Lord Winchelsea for his spirit.

LETTER LXXXVI.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday night, August 4, 1776.

I SHALL not go to Park Place till the day after to-morrow, having allowed this interval in hopes of finding the greater amendment. I am glad to find everybody thinks I was too much alarmed. The King said he heard it was a very slight attack, but that I was extremely shocked. I am not at all ashamed of being thought too sensible about my friends.

I do not wonder Mr. C. is so gay. I suppose this

fine season has raised his spirits. They say it has done Lord G. Germaine great good.

I am still less surprised to hear Lord —— said Mr. Conway could not open his eye without help.

"I have seen the man that saw that wondrous sight,"

and should not be surprised if he said he had *seen a comet drop down hail.*

The charade is much better than what I guessed; it is the word *Italien.* Though you do not understand Latin, Madam, you know that *ita* is Latin and *lien* French, — but perhaps you don't understand French neither.

Pray tell our lord that I found last night in Dr. King's Works that Archbishop Laud *or* Sir John Robinson, who I think was our lord's grandfather, left 100*l.* to whoever would translate Laud's book against Fisher into Latin. I hope the prelate's self-love was the donor,* and not the Martial Gentleman in the Parlour. There is a great deal of the petty history of Queen Anne's reign, in that Dr. King's Works, and yet it requires my perseverance to read three volumes of small print, in which is so much trash. The man had some sense, a great deal more reading, and some humour, but the latter is very vulgar, and pertly vulgar, the worst sort; and oftener fails than succeeds. Then it is the humour of a bigot, who always laughs when he is ill-humoured, and who thinks he must be comical, if the Bible is on his side, for what really

* It was not the "Martial Gentleman in the Parlour." I have a copy of his will in which no such bequest appears.—Ed.

makes a bigot laugh, is, that he flatters himself his adversary will be damned. King was besides a jester on the side of Sacheverel and against liberty, in an age when our ancestors had too much sense to be joked into slavery. I am not surprised that this new edition of his works is published now: his humour, though stale, has a better chance of success, than even when it was fresh. His biographer says he was sullen, morose, peevish, said many ill-natured things, was drunken, religious and strictly virtuous, a complete character of a high church saint! To prevent your dipping into his verses, I will advertize you that he was an execrable poet, and at the end of his first volume, recommends a republication of fifty thousand verses still more wretched than his own; at the same time advising a translation of our poets into Latin to give foreigners an idea of our poetry! I beg your ladyship's pardon for saying so much on a trumpery author, but I have no news, and he was new to me.

LETTER LXXXVII.

Strawberry Hill, August 16, 1766.

I CANNOT answer your ladyship's questions from any Parisian authority, for my dear old woman, who does not trouble her head about the Court, seldom tells me anything but what relates to her own circle. I have heard here of the favour of my Lady Lucan, and having the same curiosity as your ladyship, have in-

quired, but the answer is not come. I know still less of Lord Clermont's successor: it certainly is not Lord Dillon's son, who is marrying Miss Phipps, for love, at Brussels. He has a cousin at Paris, a beau Dillon, and a fine dancer. If Lady Lucan has made such a conquest by her painting, I think I, who was her master, ought at least to be a minister—but I doubt my fate will resemble me to some Prince, I forget whom, whose tomb they shew at Westminster Abbey, who was son, brother, uncle, and father of Kings, but never was King himself.

No, madam, I shall not go to Brighthelmstone, but another journey that will at least vary the scene a little, for Lady Di. I have asked my nephew's leave to shew them Houghton, and to Mr. Conway and Lady Ailesbury. I do not speak positively, you perceive. I must have permission first.

You may be sure I enter very much, madam, into your sensations about Miss Vernon's trip to Winterslow Lodge, and approve your consenting to it. One cannot hinder others from doing what one wishes they did not, when they are not in the wrong for doing it; and yet I know one still wishes it did not happen. You can meet with nobody that feels this more than I do; but one must conquer one's-self on those occasions. It is difficult, I own; but as nobody feels exactly what one feels one's-self upon all situations, it is not reasonable to prescribe rules to them from one's own disposition: and yet, though I preach, I admire your fortitude in not having wanted to be preached to; nor is the

preacher always so equitable himself. I am sorry you are losing Mr. James. I know what a loss it is to miss a person whose opinions agree with one's own. I will not preach on this chapter too, for I am sure my practice would not be conformable to my doctrine.

Mr. Conway is visibly much mended; and though my impatience is not satisfied yet, in all probability no traces of his disorder will remain. His countenance is quite come to itself; and his disposition was so little disturbed, that in one of the rainy days I passed there, he employed all the morning in cleaning his own boat. He is as indifferent about the accident, and talks of it with as much unconcern as if he had only been out on a skirmishing party.

Friday 16th.

I began this yesterday, and was interrupted. To-day I have heard the shocking news of Mr. Damer's death, who shot himself yesterday, at three o'clock in the morning, at a tavern in Covent Garden. My first alarm was for Mr. Conway; not knowing what effect such a horrid surprise would have on him, scarce recovered from an attack himself; happily it proves his nerves were not affected, for I have had a very calm letter from him on the occasion. They have sent for me to town, and I shall go to-morrow morning. Mr. Charles Fox, with infinite good-nature, met Mrs. Damer coming to town, and stopped her to prepare her for the dismal event. It is almost impossible to refrain from bursting out into common-place reflections on this occasion; but can the walls of Almack's help

moralizing, when 5000*l.* a year in present, and 22,000*l.* in reversion, are not sufficient for happiness, and cannot check a pistol!

For the first time in my life I think I do not wish Lord Ossory a son, or Lady Anne greatly married! What a distracted nation! I do not wonder Dr. Battie died worth 100,000*l.* Will anybody be worth a shilling but mad doctors? I could write volumes; but recollect that you are not alone as I am, given up to melancholy ideas, with the rain beating on the sky-light and gusts of wind. On other nights, if I heard a noise, I should think it was some desperate gamester breaking open my house; now, every flap of a door is a pistol. I have often said, this world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel: but when I thought so first, I was more disposed to smile than to feel; and besides, England was not arrived at its present pitch of frenzy. I begin to doubt whether I have not lived in a system of errors. All my ideas are turned topsy turvy. One must go to some other country and ask whether one has a just notion of anything. To me, everybody round me seems lunatic; yet I think they were sober and wise folks from whom I received all my notions, on money, politics, and what not. Well! I will wait for the echo—I know no better oracle. Good night, madam. You excuse me in any mood, and therefore I will make no apology for this incoherent rhapsody. My thoughts, with those I love, always flow according to the cast of the hour. A good deal of sensibility

and very shattered nerves expose one to strong impressions. Yet when the sages of this world affect a tenderness they do not know, may not a little real feeling be pardoned? It seems, Mentor Duke of Montague had made a vow of ever wearing weepers for his vixen turtle, and it required a jury of matrons and divines to persuade him he would not go to the Devil and his wife, if he appeared in scarlet and gold on the Prince's birth-day; but he is returned to close mourning like Hamlet, and every Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, is edified both ways.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 22, 1776.

I PERCEIVE at last, madam, that it is very foolish to live out of the world, and a good deal alone; one contracts the strongest prejudices! one fancies one grows old, because one is near threescore; that it is absurd to lay plans for ten or twenty years hence; that one shall not govern the next generation as one did their grandfathers and grandmothers; in short, one imagines one is not immortal. Nay, though there never was an age in which youth thought it so right to anticipate all its prerogatives, and declare its veterans Struldbrugs a little before our time, we silly folks in the country despair of recovering the province of wisdom, that is keeping young people for ever in leading strings, while we enjoy the world and dispose of all its blessings over our bottle.

The picture of St. George has opened my eyes. I will launch into the world again, and propose to be prime minister to King George V., and lay a plan for governing longer than Cardinal Fleury, by surfeiting all the young nobility at Eton and Westminster schools with sugar-plums. In the meantime if I grow deaf, like the late or present governor, I will have master George V. taught to talk to me upon his fingers, which will teach both him and me to spell, for it would not be proper to have him bawling secrets of state to me through a speaking-trumpet: and when I come to be minister, I will secure the attachment of all the young senators by getting drunk with them every night till six in the morning; and if I should never be sober enough to give away places, which is the only real business of a minister, I will marry a Scotch wife, who shall think of nothing else. I will do still more, and what no minister yet could ever compass, I will prevent all clamour, by adopting St. George's motto,—"*Honi soit qui mal y pense,*" which, if inscribed on the picture now in agitation, will certainly hinder anybody's smiling at it. As one cannot entirely divest one's self of one's character,

But find the ruling passion strong in death,

I propose to conclude my career in a manner worthy of an antiquary, as I was in the last century, and when I am satiated with years and honours, and arrived at a comfortable old age, to break my neck out of a cherry tree in robbing an orchard, like the Countess of Desmond at an hundred and forty; but don't mention

this last idea, madam, lest that roguish lad, the first lord of the admiralty, should steal the thought from me.

Thursday evening.

I scribbled the above this morning on receiving your ladyship's letter, and have since been at the regatta at Richmond, which was the prettiest and the foolishest sight in the world, as all regattas are. The scene, which lay between the Duke of Montagu's and Lady Cowper's, is so beautiful, that, with its shores covered with multitudes, and the river with boats, in the finest of all evenings, nothing could be more delightful. The King and Queen were on a stage on their own terrace; there were but few barges and streamers, except one of the Duke of Newcastle's, and nobody more in masquerade than they are every day; but enough of a puppet-show.

The Echo is a very discreet personage, and never in a hurry. Ministers are not invulnerable, as you thought. The expedition against Charlestown has failed. A man-of-war is lost, with a captain, a lieutenant, and two hundred men, and, as Lord Cranley told me, Sir Peter Parker himself is wounded in six places. They were forced besides to burn a store-ship; and what is ten times worse, *the cowardly rebels* behaved remarkably well. It is called a very ill-advised attempt; though ten days ago what bragging of having got a fifty-gun ship over the bar of Charlestown, which had always been thought impossible!

I cannot tell whether I shall go to Houghton, till I

know what Mr. Conway determines. The Beauclercs certainly do not go. Mr. Craufurd sent me a messenger last Friday to tell me the horrid fate of Mr. Damer, and to say he should not see me unless I was in town on Sunday. As I went on the unhappy occasion, I sent to him—and he was out of town. I should not have gone on purpose, as I know him a little too well.

Adieu! madam; say nothing, and wait for the Echo still—to the end of the year. What she says then will be important.

P.S. You may be perfectly easy about Lord Chewton, for the land forces could not act, though they disembarked on Long Island,—a very ingenious exploit!

LETTER LXXXIX.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 22, 1776.

I AM much obliged to Lord Ossory, madam, and certainly do not mean to steal a visit to Ampthill in his absence. I shall not be able to see it this month, for I am waiting for Mr. Essex to finish my new tower, which, as my farmer said, is still older than any of the rest.

Pray don't think I am tired of your stories. Nothing is so pleasant as the occurrences of society in a letter. I am always regretting in my correspondence with Madame du Deffand and Sir Horace Mann, that I must not make use of them, as the one has never lived in England, and the other not these fifty years, and so any

private stories would want notes as much as Petronius. Sir Horace and I have no acquaintance in common but the Kings and Queens of Europe.

I don't know that the governor was literally writing to Lord Rockingham ; but not having succeeded in his last tergiversation, and being a little disappointed too by the fall of my Lord of Chester, he has been all this summer a violent anti-courtier, till finding that Lord George was discontent with the other ministers, and that Lady George wanted a loo party, he and his cameleon have attached themselves there, and swear *by George*, like my Lord Hertford.

It is charming, I own, to have dancing spirits, like the Duchess of Queensberry, in the 16th lustrum ; but I don't think if I had, that I should have courage to make use of them. I am strangely afraid of being too young of my age. If everybody was an hundred, and I was only ninety, I would play at marbles, if I liked it, because my seniors would say, *that poor young creature!* but the sound of *that old fool!* is too dreadful : and to live upon the memory of what one has been, when nobody remembers it but one's self, is still worse. It is odd, that grey hairs, and dim eyes, and aches, should not be sufficient, but that many want a monitor like Saladin's to cry *Remember you grow old.*

Do you know, madam, that the ministers firmly believe, from the captain of a ship that met another ship at sea, that Lord Howe has joined his brother, and they were preparing to storm New York. The circumstances are no doubt very probable ; but should you

believe that the silent Howes communicated their intentions to a passenger that was walking by at sea? The general has been profoundly taciturn for six weeks, and I don't think that, in that family, two negative reserves make an affirmative chattering.

Guessing I don't love, because I seldom guess right, but I have something that is called a *presentiment*, that tells me we shall hear of something called a *negotiation*. I could give something like reasons for my opinion, but as I always give up anything rather than dispute, it would be inconvenient to my acquiescent system to furnish myself with arguments, which serve no purpose but to make one obstinate to one's opinion. When one believes without consideration, there is no difficulty in changing sentiments.

Sir William Hamilton called on me yesterday for a moment; he is going to Warwick Castle for a fortnight, and I hope will return charmed with his new niece.

LETTER XC.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 9, 1776.

SOMEBODY, I know not whom, taking me for your ladyship's postman instead of your gazetteer, I confess, without degrading me, has sent me the enclosed letter for you. As the postmark is Geneve, I should have supposed it came from Monsieur Hubert; but as he can never have heard of me but from your ladyship, he cannot be such an oaf as to think a letter would

find me sooner than you, and, besides, he must know your direction. In short, it is like Anthony Henley's direction to the Duke of Somerset over against the trunk-shop at Charing-cross, except that in the present case the trunk-shop is very angry at the impertinence to the Duke of Somerset.

I am quite alone and wishing myself at Ampthill. I did not think Mr. Essex could have come so *mal-à-propos*, but it is so difficult to get him, and he has built me a tower so exactly of the fourteenth century, that I did not dare to put him off, lest it should not be ready for furnishing next spring. It is one of those tall thin Flemish towers that are crowned with a roof like an extinguisher, and puts one in mind of that at Thornbury, called *Buckingham's Plotting Closet.* I hope no Cardinal Wolsey will sit on my skirts for the likeness.

I have lately been lent two delicious large volumes of Queen Elizabeth's jewels, plate, and the new year's gifts to her: every page of one of them is signed by Lord Burleigh. She had more gold and silver plate than Montezuma, and even of her father's plunder of cathedrals and convents, particularly rich mitres set with jewels, and I don't doubt but she sometimes wore them as head of the church, and fancied herself like Pope Joan. I have extracted some of the articles that are most curious, and here they are.

A looking-glass with the *steel* of agate. [This shews they had no quicksilvered glass, and she must have looked delightfully fierce in a piece of polished steel.]

But this was of agate; and the glass was of berril, and had her mother Anne Boleyn's arms. What a treasure this would be at Strawberry!

A porringer of white purselyn [porcelain] garnished with gold, and a lion at top. [The first porcelain I have read of was in Queen Mary's reign.]

One case of leather painted and gilt with the Duke of Northumberland's [Dudley's] arms, having therein one broad knife, one lesser, two forks, and seven small knives, the hafts of all being silver, enamelled with his arms and word [motto].

One standish of mother-of-pearl, garnished with silver gilt, with three boxes for ink, dust [sand], and counters of silver gilt. These were, I suppose, to calculate with, as I think they still do in the Exchequer.

A gilt font with a cover, having at top a gilt cross chased with antique faces; also the hand [handle] and foot, and with roses and pomegranates for [Henry the Eighth and Catherine of Arragon. This should be at Ampthill against Lord Gowran's christening] upon the brim, and thereon written, *Maria Regina, Veritas Temporis filia.*

A ship for frankincense of mother-of-pearl, the foot, garnishment, and cover of silver gilt, having the griffon holding the pillar, and Cardinal Wolsey's arms, and a little spoon of silver gilt in it. You see, madam, by this, and the Duke of Northumberland's knives, that it was charming to be a king or queen in those days, and that all was fish that came to the crown's net. In short, I am exceedingly angry at Messrs. Hampden and

Pym, that were the cause of all these pretty baubles being melted down.

One standing cup of Flanders making, garnished with pearls, enamelled in divers places, containing in the foot thereof seven trenchers of silver parcel gilt standing upon the sides [I cannot make out the ichnography of this brave cup], seven forks set with three pearls a piece; at the end seven knives in a case, of the like work, and one pair of snippers [snuffers], the hafts of the knives of wood, and the ends silver gilt, with a pearl at the end of each; and in the top four goblets gilt, and three cups of assay [for the taster] gilt, twelve spoons gilt, and the salts garnished with false pearls, and prettily enamelled; and a candlestick having two sockets joined together; and in the top a clock.

One bed-pan, having the Queen's arms enamelled at the end. Here was luxury, and magnificence, and taste! I have a great mind to print these dear MSS., and another of Anne of Denmark's furniture at Somerset House, which was lent to me lately too. This majesty's joy was in canopies: she had more than there are chairs now in St. James's; and now and then she gave a bed to her lady of the sweet coffers. She had sweet bags enough to hold all the perfumes of Arabia, and a suit of arras with the history of Charles Brandon, and embroidered carpets to lay over cupboards, and fine caparisons of purple velvet richly embroidered all over with silver, made for his Highness's horse to tilt with in Spain at the time of his being there, which his

Queen Henrietta Maria, being a good housewife, ordered to be converted into a bed, as she ordered another bed to be *translated,* says the inventory, into the French fashion. Queen Anne had, besides, a cradle-mantle of crimson velvet with a broad gold lace bordered with ermines, and lined with carnation taffety; and pillows laced with gold and silver; but, alas! she had only six pair of fine Holland sheets, and thirty pair of ordinary Holland. There remained also three folio pages full of the robes of Henry VIII., and a diaper table-cloth, whose borders were of gold needle-work, and one dozen of napkins suitable; and a smock very richly wrought with gold, silver, and silk. Pray, madam, do you think this was her Majesty's wedding shift? I will mention nothing more, but a cabinet of ebony, inlaid with silver, *white* ebony [probably ivory] and gilt, with flowers and beasts; and in the drawers a comb-case furnished, two gilt cups in the shape of turkeys [as I have three castors like owls], a dresser for the tongue [I suppose a scraper], and sundry pencils and knitting needles: and another cabinet of cloth of silver, lined with orange-tawny velvet [probably a casket].

Well! considering this solid magnificence, must not all good Christians pray, that when his Majesty has sometime or other conquered America, he will extend his arms to Peru and Mexico, that the Crown may eat off gold trenchers set with pearls, and that the Queen may have smocks as rough with embroidery as hands can make them, and every thing for the bed suitable? So prays her and your ladyship's poor beadsman.

LETTER XCI.

Strawberry Hill, October 13, 1776.

JUST after I had sent away my last packet with Monsieur Hubert's letter, I heard of General Howe's success, but concluding your ladyship would hear it from London, I did not write another letter, besides that I knew no particulars. I am not quite of Mr. Fitzpatrick's opinion that the event is of no consequence to the ministers. I believe a small check would have made them doubt a little whether they should meet the Parliament,—at least for this last month I never saw people more desponding; and this victory has certainly raised their spirits in proportion; at least it has in all I have seen, and I have not seen a soul but courtiers since the news came. Indeed I have not been out of my own house, for on Tuesday last as I came out of town my foot slipped as I got into my chaise, and I hit my knee, which brought the gout thither, and though it is almost gone, it kept me from dining at Lady Blandford's to-day, and has hindered me from scrambling into my new tower with Mr. Essex, which was a vexation; but as I am got into that very grave year, my sixtieth, it is not becoming to be moved at any thing; and so, as philosophy is always the thing one has when one wants it, I pretended to be very indifferent about going into the tower, and only scolded my footman for something that would not have made

me peevish at any other time, which I think proves I am a true philosopher.

If you do not understand Monsieur Hubert's letter, madam, how is it possible I should? You seem to have described me to him as an agreeable mixture of the continent Scipio and a member of the Hell-fire Club; nay, and to have bestowed two as uncommon ladies on me who were content without being in love with, and yet could pass a whole night in hearing very indelicate conversation. Dames more extraordinary certainly than Scipio himself! I am unfortunately of an age not to attempt to clear myself of the character of the chaste Roman, but I beg you will undeceive Monsieur Hubert about my licentious conversation, which I hope is not one of my faults. When you are in train of defending me, madam, I beg you will also undeceive him about the shining merits he supposes in me. I hate to have any body think better of me than I deserve; and I must say your ladyship's partiality to me, at least your favour, is apt to rate me above the common run of men, which I know I am not.

I never had any thing like a solid understanding on one side, or wit on the other. As a proof that I know my own level, you have always heard me speak with enthusiasm of Charles Townshend, George Selwyn, Charles Fox, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Mr. Gray, Mr. Gibbon, and of every body of singular capacity or parts, which is seldom the case but of those who are conscious of having no pretensions; but this is growing too grave

à propos to Mr. Hubert's wild letter. If I had wit, I should have laughed at it with some wit.

I am exceedingly inclined to come to Ampthill about the 24th. I have no exceptions to the party before as individuals, but as too numerous; besides I promised to go again to Park Place, and if I can walk tolerably by that time, think of going thither about the 18th or 19th for a couple of days, but I will neither embarrass them nor you with my gout, and will be sure it is gone before I frisk anywhere.

Oct. 15.

I received your postscript, and add one to mine. About the American news, I say what I always have thought and said, that whatever way this war ends, it will be fatal to this country. The liberty of America made it flourish to the prodigious height it did. If governed by an army, instead of inviting settlers and trade, it will be deserted and be a burthen to us, as Peru and Mexico, with all their mines, have been to Spain. The war has already drained us of men; if the army could be brought back, how many, between climate, and other chances, will return? Our ships are entering on their third winter in those seas, and we have flung away in those three years what should have lessened our debt, and prepared against a war with France. The plea for the last peace was our inability of proceeding with the war. Are we in the condition we were in 1763? How soon we shall have a French war, I know not; it is much talked of already at Paris; but come when it will, then will be the mo-

ment of judging of this war with the Colonies. I believe France will then recover Canada, with interest; and for the East Indies, which our fleets, supported by our trade, obtained, I have always looked on them as a vision, which made us drunk with riches, which will be a burthen to maintain, and which will vanish like a scene in the Arabian tales. I have not less gloomy ideas of your Ireland, where, I conclude, the first storm will burst. I could carry my prophecy much farther; but the present exultation speaks it all —nor does it surprise me. It is natural, I doubt, for the human heart to pass from despondency to intoxication; nor can one wonder. I believe it is the truest philosophy, to think only of the present moment. Chance is a more potent sovereign than foresight, which has no ways and means but probability to work with. I honour chance, and beg her to contradict all my prophecies.

I heard the story of the Prince of Conti here, never from France: indeed, I heard two stories, one of the late Prince, another of the present, and know not which your ladyship means. Neither sounded to me in the least probable. I still less know who the lady is, that is only indulged in feeding her horse with cherries—a luxury she cannot enjoy above one month in the twelve. As this is October, when I hear it, it puts me in mind of the late Duke of Cleveland, who though past twenty when his father was dying in December, was overjoyed, and said, "Now my mother must stay in my father's room, she cannot watch

me, and I will go into the garden and get birds'-nests."

Mr. Conway has certainly marks of his disorder still, though not considerable. I hope to find him still more mended than he was.

LETTER XCII.

Arlington Street, November 13, 1776.

As next to sense and wit, I love nonsense; and as it is very convenient to love the last, especially if it will produce the second, I shall certainly indulge myself, since my quotation from a certain potion (which I do not think the most rational performance in the world) from a certain book gave occasion to your ladyship to make an application of as much wit as ever I heard in my life; and yet so obvious an one that it is amazing it never struck anybody before. My Lord J. may comfort himself, for though he is very blind, you have discovered that if he had five more eyes, and all seven were as good as Argus's, they might prove no preservative. I sent you, on Monday, another piece of nonsense, and expect great returns from it, though you never can exceed your last quotation. You guessed very right too about Strawberry.

I have called this morning on Lady Warwick, but they are gone out of town again. News I found none, but that Mr. North is to marry Miss Egerton, with 100,000*l.* to begin the world with.

Yesterday, just after I arrived, I heard drums and trumpets, in Piccadilly: I looked out of the window and saw a procession with streamers flying. At first I thought it a press-gang, but seeing the corps so well drest, like Hussars, in yellow with blue waistcoats and breeches, and high caps, I concluded it was some new body of our allies, or a regiment newly raised, and with new regimentals for distinction. I was not totally mistaken, for the Colonel is *a new ally*. In short, this was a procession set forth by Mr. Bates, Lord Littelton's chaplain, and author of the old Morning Post, and meant as an appeal to the town against his antagonist, the new one. I did not perceive it, but the musicians had masks; on their caps was written *The Morning Post*, and they distributed hand-bills. I am sure there were at least between thirty and forty, and this mummery must have cost a great deal of money. Are not we quite distracted, reprobate, absurd, beyond all people that ever lived? The new Morning Post, I am told, for I never take in either, exceeds all the outrageous Billingsgate that ever was heard of. What a country! Does it signify what happens to it? Is there any sense, integrity, decency, taste, left? Are not we the most despicable nation upon earth, in every light? A solemn and expensive masquerade exhibited by a clergyman, in defence of daily scandal against women of the first rank, in the midst of a civil war! and while the labouring poor are torn from their families by press-gangs! and a foreign war is hanging over our heads! And every-

body was diverted with this!—Do you think, madam, that anything can save such a sottish and stupid nation? Does it deserve to be saved? you that have children will wish for miracles; as I have none but what Mary provides, I can almost wish we may be scourged. I pity the unborn, who were in the entail of happiness, but what can be said for those in present possession?

P.S. I return to-morrow to Strawberry.

LETTER XCIII.

Arlington Street, December 3, 1776.

I SHOULD not have waited for a regular response, madam, if I had not been precisely in the same predicament with your ladyship, reduced to write from old books to tell you any thing new. I have been three days at Strawberry, and have not seen a creature but Sir John Hawkins's five volumes, the two last of which, thumping as they are, I literally did read in two days. They are old books to all intents and purposes, very old books; and what is new, is like old books, too, that is, full of minute facts that delight antiquaries,—nay, if there had never been such things as parts and taste, this work would please every body. The first volume is extremely worth looking *at*, for the curious facsimiles of old music and old instruments, and so is the second. The third is very heavy; the two last will amuse you, I think, exceedingly, at least they do me.

My friend, Sir John, is a matter-of-fact-man, and does now and then stoop very low in quest of game. Then he is so exceedingly religious and grave as to abhor mirth, except it is printed in the old black letter, and then he calls the most vulgar ballad pleasant and full of humour. He thinks nothing can be sublime but an anthem, and Handel's choruses heaven upon earth. However he writes with great moderation, temper, and good sense, and the book is a very valuable one. I have begged his Austerity to relax in one point, for he ranks comedy with farce and pantomime. Now I hold a perfect comedy to be the perfection of human composition, and believe firmly that fifty Iliads and Æneids could be written sooner than such a character as Falstaff's. Sir John says that Dr. Wallis discovered that they who are not charmed with music, want a nerve in their brain. This would be dangerous anatomy. I should swear Sir John wants the comic nerve; and by parity of reason, we should ascribe new nerves to all those who have bad taste, or are delighted with what others think ridiculous. We should have nerves like Romish saints to preside over every folly; and Mr. Cosmo must have a nerve which I hope Dr. Wallis would not find in 50,000 dissections. Rechin, too, had a sort of nerve that is lost like the music of the ancients; yet, perhaps, the royal *touch* could revive it more easily than it cures the evil.

4th.

The quarrel between the SS. Cosmo and Damian, they say, is at an end. I kept back my letter in hopes

of something to tell your ladyship, but there is a universal yawn, and the town as empty as in August. I heard only a good story of Mrs. Boscawen, the admiral's widow, who lives near London, and came to town as soon as she had dined at her country hour. She said, I expected to find every body at dinner, but instead of that, I found all the young ladies strolling about the streets, and not thinking of going home to dress for dinner; so I had set out in the evening, and yet got to town in the morning of the same day.

I shall stay here for Mr. Mason's Caractacus that is to be acted on Friday, and then return to my Hill.

LETTER XCIV.

Arlington Street, December 17, 1776.

It is not from being made Archbishop of York that I write by a secretary,* madam; but because my right hand has lost its cunning. It has had the gout ever since Friday night, and I am overjoyed with it, for there is no appearance of its going any farther. I came to town on Sunday in a panic, concluding I should be bed-rid for three months, but I went out last night, and think I shall be able in a few days to play upon the guitar if I could play upon it at all.

I know very little, but that for want of Parliament General Burgoyne is at this moment making an oration

* Kirgate.—Ed.

from the rostrum to the citizens of Westminster, in recommendation of Lord Petersham; and that Doctor Franklin, at seventy-two, is arrived in a frigate at Nantes, and has brought in two prizes that he took in his way. He was to be at Paris on Saturday night. He left every thing quiet in America on the 30th of October, and I have been just told that letters are come from Lord Howe of the 13th of November, in which he asks for some more cables, and says he has written by another ship that is not arrived.

I have seen the picture of St. George, and approve the Duke of Bedford's head, and the exact likeness of Miss Vernon,* but the attitude is mean and foolish, and expresses silly wonderment. But of all delicious is a picture of a little girl of the Duke of Buccleugh, who is overlaid with a long cloak, bonnet, and muff, in the midst of the snow, and is perished blue and red with cold, but looks so smiling, and so good-humoured, that

* This picture, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, was painted for Mr. Rigby. The attitude of Miss Vernon is, as Walpole here says, affected. That of Lord William Russell illustrates the genius of Sir Joshua. The story is told, that the boy was unwilling to stand still for his portrait, and running about the room, crouched in a corner to avoid it. Sir Joshua, at once seizing the possibility of painting him so, said, "Well, stay there, my little fellow," and drew him in a natural position of fear at the dragon.

This group of portraits, which is commonly called "The Bedford Family," is not in the possession of the descendants of any one of the subjects of it.

Mr. Rigby intended to leave it to the late Duke of Bedford, and having mentioned his intention, afterwards told his Grace that he might send for it. The Duke, from delicacy, which Mr. Rigby appears to have construed as indifference, omitted to do so, and it was given to Mr. Drummond of the Grange, from whose hands it has since passed into Lord Jersey's, at Middleton Park, where it now is.—Ed.

one longs to catch her up in one's arms and kiss her till she is in a sweat and squalls.

My hand has not a word more to say.

LETTER XCV.

Arlington Street, December 23, 1776.

I KNOW, madam, I ought to have thanked your ladyship immediately for your very friendly letter, but I have been too much out of order even to dictate. Though just now I am out of pain, I am so unwell that I conclude there is a mass of gout moulding itself for the rest of my limbs, though hitherto it has kept closely to my right arm. I did most assuredly intend to be at Ampthill this Christmas, and my project was to have asked you last Tuesday when it should be. I heartily repent that I did not make my visit when I was able: I ought to have remembered that I must take time by the forelock, especially considering how few hairs are left in that lock for me.

The party you are so good as to propose to me, madam, would be very agreeable, indeed, if it could do any thing but tantalize me; and I am sad company for the young or healthful. I must not think of going any whither but with Wolsey's speech in my mouth, "Father abbot, I am come to lay my weary bones amongst you!" I am sure I have nothing else to carry!

So, the Howes did not think their prodigious victory

worth writing a line about! They little know that if they did but send us a bantam egg we can hatch an ostrich from it. I do not know what ardour anybody may have to confer with Dr. Franklin, but I do not believe the Doctor will condescend to be at home to an Englishman. They say Lord S. took infinite pains for an interview with Silas Dean; and when he did at last bring it about, he might as well have obtained a personal audience from the Grand Signior without an interpreter.

As I have no resource but in quartos in the few moments when I can do any thing, I am reading the Life of Philip II., by a Professor of St. Andrews. I sent for it to see how a Scotchman would celebrate the barbarities of Philip, Cardinal Granville, and the Duke of Alva, in the United Provinces; but to my utter astonishment the man does not, as most biographers do, when they write the life of a Charles I., or a Richard III., fall in love with his hero. On the contrary, he is so just and explicit, that I believe even Dr. Franklin would admit him to kiss his hand. But I have read only the first volume: the author may come about: the second tome of many a man is a contradiction to his first. Adieu, madam, I wish I could distribute all the happiness I miss upon your Christmas.

LETTER XCVI.

Arlington Street, January 1, 1777.

If pain and total helplessness are illness, I was, indeed, very bad, my dear madam, when I dispatched my last note to Ampthill. I think my disorder had its crisis on Sunday. By the help of quieting draughts, I have had three good nights since, and not much pain. As I feel no new attack any where else, I begin to venture to flatter myself that my feet will escape; and for my hands, they must wait for the pity of the weather before they can recover. I should not have said so much on myself, but to excuse my having said so little in gratitude for your ladyship's letters.

Till Monday, I was able to see nobody at all, and now that I should be glad to see a few, there is not a soul in town to come. Mr. Gibbon, who called yesterday, is gone to Sussex to-day for a fortnight. I told him, I could not conceive how anybody that has not the gout, and might go to Ampthill, could go anywhere else.

Lady Paine, who called here last Friday night with Lady Lucan, when I was not able to receive them, was taken ill that very night, and has been in great danger ever since: the message this morning is a little more favourable; every body that knows her must be in great pain for her. I am in hopes George will arrive from Bath to-night, and the Beauclercs in about a week. If I have no return, I shall be able, probably, in some

few days, to write a line or two with my own hand, and be in better spirits, which are not quite recovered yet.

LETTER XCVII.

January 7, 1777.

I BEGIN a letter, madam, long before it will get into its chaise, because being as slow an operation as engraving, I must take due time, or you will arrive in town before it sets out. That I am at all recovered is a prodigy in such weather: perhaps the gout is frozen, and my pains may return on a thaw. At present I am tolerably free, but still have a bootikin on each hand, and write with a bear's paw.

I saw long ago the passage your ladyship took the trouble to transcribe. To be cited so honourably by Voltaire would be flattering, indeed, if he had not out of envy taken pains to depreciate all the really great authors of his own country, and of this; and what sort of judgment is that which decries Shakspeare and commends *me?*

I have seen Mr. Craufurd twice, which I think a great deal, considering how little he can be entertained here, and that he is sure I will join him in no Io Pæans. In truth, I know there is a great deal of water mixed with the wine of all the late bumpers; nay, I believe, Echo will still drink her glass.

January 8.

I have just got an account of Lord Villiers's play. It went off to admiration; and Le Texier, which, I believe, was inimitable. Indeed, considering what an Iceland night it was, I concluded the company and audience would all be brought to town in waggons petrified, and stowed in a statuary's yard in Piccadilly. Has your ladyship dipped into Mr. Ayscough's Semiramis? Read it you could not; it is the very worst of all our late trash. Mr. Colman says, it is Voltaire "a-scue," I know not how to spell that word. My poor hand will not let me say any more, and news I know none.

LETTER XCVIII.

January 8, 1777.

I WAS very sorry, my dear lord, that it was too late to write to you last night when I heard the news, that I might immediately make you easy about your friends. It was past eleven when Mrs. Howe, at Lady Hertford's, received a note to tell her that Mud Island was taken *December 2nd*, and that only four men were killed and five wounded. This shews that the former accounts of the capture, and of the slaughter, were totally false. I know nothing more, but conclude the Americans had abandoned the fort, and very probably are gone to New York. The belief of a French war is far from decreasing.

Duke Hamilton most assuredly marries Miss Burrell.

Lady George Germaine was given over yesterday; was rather better at night, but is not so to-day.

I say nothing about myself, for I am ashamed. The severe colds and fogs frighten me, and I doubt will bring the gout whether I stir or not: I have twice thought it actually come; but it uses me like a coquette that will not part with one, though she does not care for anything but the power. The gout, that can make conquests only of the aged, is still more jealous. I had promised myself a most comfortable week at Ampthill, but I find that the few visions I had left, must vanish like all the rest! A clock has struck that wakes one from dreams!

P.S. After dinner.

I have now seen the office account. It says Mud Island was taken on the 15th of *November;* so I suppose the note to Mrs. Howe mistook the date of the letters for that of the surrender; but I am sure of what was in the note, for Lady Mary Coke read it twice with all her importance of accent. The Americans abandoned the fort the night of the attack, leaving all their cannon and stores, and having lost, says the Office, four hundred men. Lord Cornwallis, on the 10th, having passed the Delaware, and being joined by Sir T. Wilson with the troops from New York, attacked Red Bank, which the Provincials abandoned too, and left their cannon and stores; so, if you believe authority, they do nothing but supply the King's troops. Sir W. Howe intended to march im-

mediately to Washington, who was at White Marsh; but as his letters are dated *December* 1st, and he had taken the island on the 15th, his *immediately* had lasted a fortnight.

I have just received Lady Ossory's, but have not time to answer it.

LETTER XCIX.

Arlington Street, Saturday 8, in the evening of your public day.

SOLITUDE of solitudes! all is solitude. I am justly punished, madam, for leaving the most agreeable place in the world, and two and a half persons for whom I have the greatest regard, to come to a place where grass would grow in the streets, if this summer it would grow anywhere. Even Lady Hertford is gone, and I suppose my Lady Townshend is on the wing. The former, I conclude, is at Wakefield races, for she does not return till Monday. In short, I have repacked up my night-cap, and am hurrying to Strawberry, only staying to do you justice on myself, and sign my confession. I was as unlucky at Luton; I sent in a memorial, begging only to see the chapel—the lord was not at home, and admittance was denied.

As I do not take the St. James's Evening Post, nor think my own works worth twopence, pray send me, if there appears, any answer to Jocasta.

On my table I found a deprecation from the Secretary of the Antiquaries, but I intend to be ob-

durate. Having antiquarian follies enough of my own, I cannot participate of Whittington and his Cat.

You may believe, madam, that I cannot have heard any news, having seen no soul but my maid Mary. A million of thanks for all your goodness to me; I do not deserve it, and I would blush at it, if that was not too common a sacrifice with me to merit being laid on your altar.

NOBLE JEFFERY,*

A POEM IN THE PRIMITIVE STYLE,
HUMBLY INSCRIBED
TO
THE MOST HONOURABLE LADY ANNE,
COUNTESS OF UPPER OSSORY,
BY THOMAS TRUEMAN, GENT.

Jeffery was a noble wight,
I will tell you all his story;
It may chance to please you much,
If it happens not to bore ye.
He was not extremely rich,
Tho' his birth was very great;
Yet he did for nothing want,
When he got a good estate.
Of good manners he the pink was,
And so humble with the great,
That he always stood uncover'd,
But when he put on his hat.
To his servants he was gentle,
After his good father's fashion,
And was never known to scold,
But when he was in a passion.
Bacchus was our hero's idol;
And, my lady, would you think it?
He, to shew his taste in wine,
Thought the best way was to drink it.

* There is no date to this poem; it may probably have been written in imitation of Goldsmith's Madam Blaize, or in contempt of him, for whom he elsewhere expresses such an unjust feeling.—Ed.

Galen's sons he seldom dealt with,
  Having neither gout nor phthisic,
Nor evacuations used,
  But when he had taken physic.
More for pastime than for lucre
  Cards and dice would Jeffery use;
Nor at either was unlucky,
  Unless it was his chance to lose.
A beautiful and virtuous lady
  Crown'd the bliss of Jeffery's life;
And when he became her spouse,
  She also became his wife.
Five short years with her he passed:
  Had it been as much again,
As she brought him children five,
  Perhaps she might have brought him ten.
Jeffery was extremely comely,
  Made exactly to a T;
And no doubt had had no equal,
  Had there been no men but he.
Great and various were his talents;
  He could speak and could compose;
And in verse had often written,
  But that he always wrote in prose.
In music few excelled our Jeffery;
  No man had a lighter finger;
And if he had but had a voice,
  He would have made a charming singer.
In optics Jeffery had great knowledge,
  And could prove as clear as light
That all diseases of the eyes
  Are very hurtful to the sight.
Jeffery's nurse had told his fortune;
  And it happen'd, as said she,
That he would expire at land,
  If he did not die at sea.
At land he died the very day
  On which deceas'd his loving wife;
And more I know, the day he died
  Was the last day of all his life.

JEFFERY'S EPITAPH.

Here Jeffery lies, who all the dead survived,
And ne'er had died, if he had never lived.

LETTER C.

January 15, 1777.

An invalid's room is commonly a coffee-house, and as I know no news, I must suppose there is none. Indeed, the town is so empty, that my circles have been small; but then there are so few of those I wish to see in town, that I have asked nobody, but trusted to chance customers. My right hand is still a good deal swelled, and has not yet moulted its covering. Loyalty and love of dress will bring up the world by Saturday. When will anything bring your ladyship and Lord Ossory? Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Fox were to leave Paris last Sunday; perhaps they may wait to see the Emperor.

Sir Ralph Paine made me a visit t'other day, and not knowing what to say to him, I asked him how he liked his new house in Grafton Street; he replied, its *centricality* made it very agreeable.

It is scarce decent to send such a scrap as a letter, but I protest I have nothing to add to it. I am so glad to be able to move my fingers again, that I should be proud to fill a sheet. Your ladyship, I know, will excuse me, and take me as I happen. In any case, I shall rejoice to exchange seeing you, for writing.

P.S. I have a charming story about Madame du Deffand and Dr. Franklin, that will divert your ladyship, but I have neither time nor fingers for it now.

LETTER CI.

Sunday, January 19, 1777.

You may imagine, madam, how much I was touched with Lady Anne's sensibility for me! and to give you some proof of mine, the very next reflection was, that I was sorry she promises to have so much. It is one of those virtues, whose kingdom is not of this world, but like patience, is for ever tried, with the greater disadvantage of wanting power to remedy half the misfortunes it feels for. Sensibility is one of the master-springs, on which most depends the colour of our lives, and determines our being happy or miserable. I have often said, that this world is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel; and sensibility has not only occasion to suffer for others, but is sure of its own portion too. Had I children, and the option of bestowing dispositions on them, I should be strangely puzzled to decide. Could one refuse them feelings that make them amiable, or confer what ensures unhappiness? But indeed on what could one decide, were the fate of others or one's own left to our arbitrement? I have no opinion of my own wisdom, and little of any body's else; but I have an odd system, that what is called *chance* is the instrument of Providence and the secret agent that counteracts what men call wisdom, and preserves order and regularity, and continuation in the whole, for you must know, madam, that I firmly believe, notwith-

standing all our complaints, that almost every person upon earth tastes upon the totality more happiness than misery; and therefore if we could correct the world to our fancies, and with the best intentions imaginable, probably we should only produce more misery and confusion. This totally contradicts what I said before, that sensibility or insensibility determine the complexion of our lives; and yet if the former casts a predominating shade of sadness over the general tenour of our feelings, still that gloom is illumined with delicious flashes. It enjoys the comforts of the compassion it bestows, and of the misfortune it relieves; and the largest dose of the apathy of insensibility can never give any notion of the transport that thrills through the nerves of benevolence when it consoles the anguish of another; but I am too much a sceptic to pretend to make or reconcile a system and its contradictions. *No* man was ever yet so great as to build that system in which other men could not discover flaws. All our reasoning, therefore, is very imperfect, and this is *my* reason for being so seldom serious, and for never disputing. I look upon human reason, as I do on the parts of a promising child —it surprises, may improve or stop short, but is not come to maturity; and therefore, if you please, I will talk of the Birth-day, and things more suited to my capacity.

I had a shining circle on the evening of that great solemnity; the Duke and Duchess of Richmond, Lady Pembroke, Lady Strafford, Mr. Conway, and Lady Ailes-

bury, in all their gorgeous attire. Lady Warwick, I hear, looked charmingly: but pray, madam, must you, to possess Miss Vernon to the last minute, lock her and yourself up in the country? You make no answer to my question of when you come. I can allow you but one week more. I propose to take the air on Thursday and Friday, to air myself at Strawberry, on Saturday and Sunday, and be ready on the Monday to wait on you, in Grosvenor Place.

Lord Dillon told me this morning that Lord Besborough and he, playing at quinze t'other night with Miss Pelham, and happening to laugh, she flew into a passion and said, "It was terrible to play with *boys!*" and our two ages together, said Lord Dillon, make up above a hundred and forty.

Sir George Warren lost his diamond order in the Council Chamber at the Birth-day in the crowd of loyal subjects. Part of Georgia is said to be returned to its allegiance to King George and Lord George. Charles Fox, I just hear, is arrived, and I conclude, Mr. Fitzpatrick. My awkward hand has made a thousand blots, but I cannot help it.

Sunday night.

Mr. Fitzpatrick is not come; but, I hope, what I I hear is not true, that he is going to America.

Monday.

A person has just been here, and told me terrible news—an express is come that yesterday morning all Bristol was in flames, and that Elliot's horse is sent thither! How dreadful! This comes of teaching the

Americans to burn towns! It will be a blessed war before it is over.

LETTER CII.

January 26, 1777.

GIVE me leave to say your ladyship quite misunderstood one paragraph in my last. Never was any thing farther from my thoughts than to accuse you of keeping your sisters too long in the country. Where upon earth could they be so well as under your care? Who would take such care of them? Who would educate and form them so well? Where could they lead so rational and at the same time so agreeable a life? And where would they be farther from seeing or hearing any thing that would pervert their minds? And pray where could they be witnesses to more sensible felicity? Do you imagine, madam, that I think it necessary that they should be married at fifteen in order to enlarge the circle of some Machiavelian aunt's political influence? Indeed I had no such idea; and, begging the pardon of the young ladies, they were not concerned in my question.

It was your ladyship was my object: I meant to ask if you intended to stay at Ampthill as long as you could keep Miss Vernon there. With all the encomiums you shower on me, it is plain I do not express myself intelligibly. As to sensible letters, I will never write one. I declare I don't know what is sense, and what

not. I have lived to doubt whether I have any one just and right idea about any thing. Nothing I thought truth and sense from my infancy seems any longer to be so. All the virtues that were crowned with palms in Greek, Roman, and English story pass for errors. I thought that liberty, for which England has struggled and fought for seven hundred years, was natural and dear to Englishmen. No such thing. I have seen a popish rebellion crushed in Scotland, and half England enraged at the Duke of Cumberland for saving them from chains. I now see all England exulting on every defeat of their own countrymen, who are fighting for our liberty as well as their own; and can I think I have any sense? Ought not I to believe that Mr. Locke was an old woman, and that we ought to say in our political litany as we do in our religious, *thy service is perfect freedom!* No, madam, no: I have done with sense, though too old to learn the folly in fashion. I have often been of opinion that it was not designed we should be able to distinguish certainly *what is truth.* Pilate asked the person most likely to resolve him; and received no answer. I will, therefore, wait with patience; it will not be such a vast while, till the time that our doubts will be cleared up. Till then, pray allow me to stick to my old fashioned nonsense; for though the sense of the age is so much improved, I don't think its nonsense is; and, besides, it is more becoming to an old man to doat in his own way, than to adopt the follies of a much more recent generation, which never sit well upon him,—at least they would not on

me. I do not say that there are not old gentlemen that can cast their skins, and come out at threescore as sleek as Adonis. Lord George Germaine can look as well as Alexander, in laurels gathered by proxy, or rather like Queen Eleanor, could sink at Charing-cross, and rise at *King*-Hithe. I am no such didapper; and if it is only for the singularity, will die as I lived with all my old errors and prejudices about me.

Lord Ossory has been exceedingly charitable, though I was an errant beggar, for I put off my frisk to Strawberry for two days on purpose to see more of him. I tell your ladyship nothing, for he will tell you all —if there is any thing, which is more than I know. I send you some French books by him for the remainder of your solitude. I am sorry to quit mine, though latterly I have had company enough; but it is comfortable to sit at home, and see as many as one wishes; and still more comfortable *just now*, to see very few of those one dislikes. In short, not to be often wished joy of what one is very sorry for! and alas! I am too old to go to France, and find many people that love liberty, though perhaps I must go thither if I desire to preserve my own. It is very indifferent where one ends, provided one is consistent. I look with scorn and horror on change of principles: it is a proof one never had any, if interest is the alternative. If this country loses its freedom, how will the names of all those who sacrificed it be execrated by their posterity! by their posterity in chains, or in the Bastille!

P.S. I must beg to have my books again.

LETTER CIII.

Strawberry Hill, June 10, 1777.

I DIRECT this to Ampthill, concluding from your unwillingness to leave it, madam, that your stay at Warwick Castle will be short. You must be charmed with it; I think awed; at least, my Gothic superstition sees every tower haunted with Beauchamps, and I could not sleep there without dreaming of Queen Elizabeth in all her pomps and pageantries. Then the chapel in the church! I beg the possessor's pardon, but I set very little store by Sir Fulke Greville. Oh! but in the Castle is a portrait of my hero, Lord Brook of the Civil War; and another of Lady Catherine Grey and her son, and of Lady Sandwich, who was no great hero of mine, no more than Lord Rochester and his monkey. Did you go to Guy's Cliff, and see how Lady Mary Greathead has painted it straw colour, and stuck cockle-shells in its hair? There was a wise, Mr. Wise too, who lived at the Priory, who was very angry with me for asking if he had *planted* much, not knowing that he was the son of London and Wise the gardeners. Does not Miss Vernon* think it would have been more historic to have drawn her accompanying Earl Guy when he slew the dun cow, than St. George killing the dragon, which is not a quarter so true?

Your ladyship's panegyric on the fine weather, if you will allow me to pun, came a day after the *fair*.

* The subject of Sir Joshua Reynolds's picture, before referred to.—ED.

June has relapsed into winter, if not to its usual rains. I found every soul in London sitting by the fire, and talking over fifteen matches, and as many promotions. Mrs. Howe was the only person that wanted no extraneous heat. Two nights ago, she said, if Lord North had *promised* the Treasury to Lord Westcote, he certainly would not have it. Entered Mr. Keene. She asked him if it was the way of the Administration to affront those they employed! He was mute. You may think what you please, sir, continued she, but I tell you, this is irreconcilable. Governor Tryon has burnt a magazine, but had great difficulty to retreat without losing all his men. Washington, they say, has laid the whole country waste. I am an old piece of wisdom, and you must bear with me. I doubt your ladyship's dislike of quitting Ampthill proceeds a little from your aversion to appearing in public; but do you know you must surmount this, nay entirely. Will you like, when your daughters are to go about, to trust them to chaperons? The longer you are a recluse, the more uneasy it will be to break through a habit. You feel Lady Georgiana's want of you, and therefore must be educating yourself to produce Lady Anne. There is no pleasure in being anybody's friend, if one is not to tell them disagreeable truths; nor any comfort in growing old, if one may not be cross and preach. Our two resources, both charmingly illnatured, are to foretell, and to blame. I make use of the first privilege, for fear of not living to enjoy the second. I have a little revenge in it too, for you *will* commend me,

though I have no merit but having lived till I am fit for nothing but doing right.

The kingdom of France does not dine with me till *next* Saturday: it will ruin me, but I try to make friends amongst them, that they may not burn poor Strawberry when they invade us. In the mean time I am a great prince. As regent to my nephew, I issued my writ to his falconer this morning, to deliver his thanks to — Thornton, Esq., during the interregnum. I have declined the superintendence of the finances, and have only taken charge of the *menus plaisirs*. Alas! I try to smile, but my gaiety is forced. I have no time to do any thing I like, and must now go and write to Charles Boone about a gentleman that is to reside with and have the care of my nephew, who is calm and does not alarm me, but they say the more likely to continue as he is.

LETTER CIV.

Strawberry Hill, June 15, 1777.

I RETURN your ladyship the general's letter, and you may be assured will never name it. The applying to him, I am satisfied, was a better method than what I suggested; and I should hope, though he does not say so, that he will take some way of apprising his friends, as he must be sensible that it will be a kind office to all concerned for the young lady; if, as I should think by Lady Louisa's account they are,

they should not yet be aware that the affair is not at an end.

I am glad, madam, you was contented with your Progress, and saw so much. Kenilworth is very awful; yet what want of taste in the choice of the situation! The chimney-piece in the gate-house I perfectly remember; it has the Earl of Leicester's crest and devices, and I have often begged Lord Hyde to take care of it. It has too much of the degenerate Gothic, or I should have tried to purchase it, as the possessor loves money a little better than a chimney-piece he neglects. Althrop is a great favourite of mine, from the number of portraits, its old simplicity, and being so connected with our story. I gave Miss Loyd several corrections to the catalogue of pictures, for they had mistaken several.

Lord Warwick, I think, may forgive me for condemning a modern steeple that only lives near him, when I have such reverence for his own castle.

My French dinner went off tolerably well, except that five or six of the invited disappointed me, and the table was not full. The Abbé Raynal not only looked at nothing himself, but kept talking to the ambassador the whole time, and would not let him see anything neither. There never was such an impertinent and tiresome old gossip. He said to one of the Frenchmen, we ought to come abroad to make us love our own country. This was before Mr. Churchill, who replied very properly, "Yes, we had some Esquimaux here lately, and they liked nothing because

they could get no train-oil for breakfast." Madame de Jarnac had a *migraine*, and Monsieur chose to keep her company.

I am glad you have heard of Mr. Fitzpatrick. You know there is another war in that part of the world: the Spaniards have taken an island on the coast of Brazil: I do not believe we shall dare to frown.

My hexagon closet will be finished in a fortnight, and then I shall be at liberty to pay my duty at Ampthill. The Churchills tell me the town says Lady Elizabeth Conway is to be married to Sir Matthew Fetherstone.

Have you got through Dr. Robertson, madam? I am not enchanted. There is a great affectation of philosophising without much success. But there is one character that charms me, besides Las Casas, at whom the good doctor rather sneers; it is that of Pedro di Gasca, who was disinterested enough to make ten parliaments blush. Do but imagine the satisfaction with which he must have retired with his poverty, after the great things he had done, when every other of his countrymen were cutting the throats of Americans for gold! He did not want to be treasurer of the navy, as well as general and pacificator. I am delighted too with the ingratitude of the Spanish monarchs to all their heroic assassins. How fortunate the Otaheitans, to have no gold mines in their country!

LETTER CV.

Strawberry Hill, June 29, 1777.

I AM heartily vexed, madam, at Lady Warwick's misadventure. See what comes of an education at Ampthill! Mr. Vernon, if he cares about grandchildren, should take away his daughters directly, or they will never have anything but peaches in brandy. The summer has made a *fausse-couche* too; I have no fruit, no flowers, no thrushes, and no blackbirds. It is quite a folly to lay out vast sums in making landscapes in England; we have no weather to enjoy them, except one jubilee in five-and-twenty years. Our ancestors had more sense; they stuck themselves in a hole behind a hill, fenced out every wind with walls, and made a glass turret on the top of their mansions, not for a prospect, but to enjoy the few moments when the sun should condescend to come in person and look after his apple-orchards and hop-grounds. They were not so absurd as to import peaches, and nectarines, and pine-apples from the south, and Highlanders from the Orcades to look after them. Since we will give ourselves such torrid airs I wonder we do not go stark and tattoo ourselves. If I have got in our natural fruit, hay, and you will have a good fire of British oak, I purpose to wait on Lord Ossory and your ladyship on the 16th or 17th of July, and instead of brushing through dripping shrubberies, we will keep ourselves warm with hot cockles and blindman's-buff, and other old English sudorifics. My Lady

Townshend, in the days of her wit, said, that Mrs. Clive's face rose on Strawberry-hill and made it sultry; but I assure you, you may sit now in her beams when she is in her zenith without being tanned.

They say Lady Elizabeth Conway's match is one of the apocryphal in the list of the forty couples which the town has laid out. I hope the other your ladyship feared, is so too. I wish any you wish may take place, but you shall not meddle a moment after the parson has said grace, for though you have the majesty of Juno, you shall never be invoked as Lucina. I even doubt whether little Guy would not have come to perfection, if you had not gone to Warwick castle till autumn. In short nothing can pacify me but a Lord Gowran. I wish uncle Richard had stayed with you a month, and then who knows what a spiteful fit might have done!

I will try to take Craufurd by storm, and hurry him into my chaise. If I give him warning, he will be sure of disappointing me.

Are you not glad, madam, there is an end of talking of poor Dr. Dodd? I felt excessively for him, without a good opinion, for between the law and his friends, he suffered a thousand deaths. They say, the tragedy of the father that accompanied the son, diverted most of the attention from Dr. Dodd.

A strange thing happened on Thursday, which I cannot tell you accurately, as it was translated to me through two or three very imperfect druggerwomen. He received a box, in which were two or three small

boxes. In the first a black one, in which he found a cornelian seal, with his own cypher and crest. Oh! I forgot to tell you *who* did—Mr. Child, of Osterley Park. With the seal was a writing, desiring him never to let the seal go out of his own hands. I was delighted, and concluded this was a talisman. No. In another box was a mourning-ring, with a topaz, others say an emerald, and some say the cornelian was an emerald. On the ring was a motto, in Latin, implying, "Keep this in memory of a dying friend." There was a third box, or there was not, and nobody knows what was in it, whether there was one or not. The cabalists are of opinion, as the delivery was made on the eve of Dr. Dodd's death, that the bequest was his, and that the seal implies that there is a forgery to come out on Mr. Child.

I am too late for the post, and, as I must go to town on Tuesday, I shall keep my letter till then, as it will have but one stage instead of two, with the chance of a postscript.

Le voici ce postscript.—I am *au fait* of Mr. Child's mysterious present; I mean the circumstances, not the solution of the enigma, which it would be a pity to know yet. The first was a cornelian seal, with R. C., and Mr. Child's crest, and these words, "*nemini confide sigillum.*" No. 2 was a mourning-ring, with a topaz seal, cypher and crest as above, and round it this oracular sentence, "*Anchora sacra decepit,*" which leave a charming latitude of guessing.

Oh! but here is another event more inexplicable still!

—a letter has been sent to the club at Stapleton's, directed to L. S. D. No mortal man could be found to expound those letters: not an Œdipus in the whole society. At last a great adept, the sage John Manners, claimed the letter. His title was contested, for, though few clubs are Academies of Inscriptions, the members were clear-sighted enough to see that L. S. D. did not signify John Manners. However, he pleaded his great experience in pounds, shillings, and pence, and insisted that the hieroglyphic letters in question, standing for those denominations, were more likely to be addressed to him than to any fellow of the society; and as far as great industry in appropriating to himself the things typified, nobody could deny the proposition; but as such a precedent would be too dangerous, and might encourage him to seize every piece of paper that commenced with these letters, the occult packet is put in sequestration, and hitherto no man has ventured to break the seal.

LETTER CVI.

Strawberry Hill, July 6, 1777.

THERE is a blacker cloud than the rain come over my prospects, madam, and I must wait its explosion! Without a figure, there is little chance of my being able to wait on you on the 16th, or sooner, which I see would be more convenient. A courier arrived yesterday from the Duchess of Gloucester to fetch Dr.

Jebb and Adair to the duke, though with little probability of their arriving time enough. We had heard he was ill, and that the surgeon that attends him had advised his setting out immediately for England, the heats of Italy having done him infinite prejudice. I believe the continual change of air and motion were the chief objects in view. He grew every day so much worse that he was put into his post-chaise and removed from Verona, but the duchess says she did not expect he would be able to get beyond the first post. To overwhelm her completely, the little prince is not in a much better state. The distress of my poor nieces, who doat on their mother, and of my brother with his two sons-in-law so ill, and with his two daughters in so melancholy a situation, calls for all the little comfort I am able to give them, and I dare not think of pleasing myself when there are such afflictions in my family. I will not dwell on these misfortunes. You are so good as to be amused with my idle gossiping, but I have no right to put your sensibility to different trials.

I have heard no more of the mysterious packets, nor indeed of anything else. I have no correspondents in town, and my French one does not trouble her head with anything beyond her own circle. I believe nothing I read in the newspapers about America; indeed they are arrived at a pitch of ignorance, that would not be excusable in Greenland. They acquainted us last week with great solemnity, that the Duchess of Queensberry was the famous Catherine Howard:—they might as well have said she was Anne Boleyn. My

humble opinion is, that we shall never recover America, and that France will take care that we shall never recover ourselves. What scratches we may give or receive, *en attendant*, seem very little to the purpose; probably we shall tumble into a war with France before the latter quite intends it, though she may not care much if we do, and then we shall be frightened out of our senses, or into them, when it is too late. But all this is no business of mine, who have lived my time, and do not, as old folks often do, propose to govern the world after I am out of it. Few persons know when they should die; I mean when they should have done living. I have taken up my strulbrugship, only reserving a comfortable annuity of cheerfulness and amusement, as monarchs do who resign their crowns, and intend to have all the pleasures of royalty without the cares; but as Care never accedes to that compact, their majesties, and I their ape, find ourselves mistaken. You see storms reach my little hill, as well as mount Athos.

I wish your ladyship had entered farther into criticisms on Dr. Robertson. I dare to answer I should approve them as much as Lord Ossory does. The very word *critical* is indeed a commentary. His philosophic solutions are as paltry as possible. You are, in good truth, a more real philosopher, madam, when you can smile over such a mishap as you relate, and

> Be mistress of yourself, though glasses break!

My little hexagon has been more fortunate, and is finished without an accident. I trust it will draw a

visit from your ladyship; you defrauded me of one this spring. If I should receive any good news from my unhappy duchess, I shall not give up the 16th; if not, I must defer it to a moment when I shall be more at liberty.

P.S. Another letter is come, dated three days later, with better accounts. The duke had borne a journey of two days very well, and slept eight hours. If these good symptoms continue, I shall treat myself with keeping my engagement. Mr. Beauclerc and Lady Di. dined here to-day; he looks so much less ill than he did, that one need never despair of any recovery after his and Lazarus's.

LETTER CVII.

Arlington Street, July 15, 1777.

I HAVE barely time to write a line, and it is to thank your ladyship for your very kind letter, which I will obey the first instant I am at liberty. I came to town this morning on business with my brother, for Lord Orford is no better, and every thing is in confusion. I had a letter from the duchess; the duke had had a tolerable night, and she begins to hope the crisis is over, but he still keeps his bed, and is as weak as possible. The hot weather, and my ocean of troubles, serious or trifling, affect my nerves so, that I can scarce write. I am a fine Hercules to think of doing twenty times more than I have strength for!

LETTER CVIII.

Saturday night, July 19, 1777.

I WOULD have given sixpence for a quarter of an hour this morning to have answered your ladyship's letter, but three persons dropped in one after another, and kept me till I was too late to dress, and so I made Mr. Morrice wait half-an-hour for dinner. It was a party made for Lady Blandford, who at last did not come, nor Lady Jane Scott, who was gone to town to buy mourning for the Duchess of Queensberry, who died on Thursday of a surfeit of cherries, as my old Countess of Desmond of robbing a walnut-tree, for the duchess's beauty at seventy-seven was as extraordinary as the other's at hundred and forty years.

I am now positively, and ultimately, and unputoffably determined, if you will let me, to be at Ampthill on Tuesday se'nnight. The Duke of Gloucester is better, and again set out; but I have so much to do this week that I cannot get away sooner, and I think the day I named comes within the time prescribed before Lord Ossory's journey to the north. I have made no idle excuses, for you see I have not stirred an inch from home this whole summer. Two days ago I did fear the gout was coming: I had walked too much in the heat, and as exercise always hurts me, I waked in the night in great pain; but it is gone, and, I trust, for some time.

I heartily pity Mr. Fitzpatrick for being engaged

in this abominable war, that is big with another, and both with ruin. Nobody do I see but holds that with France unavoidable, since they are determined to try how much we will bear; and I hear of ministers, and of more ministerlings who would be fain thought to have had no share in the culpability of our measures. I am sure they who have not had, have cause to congratulate themselves. My cousin, Dick Walpole, one of my this morning's visitors, told me there is a fresh account of Lord Cornwallis's defeat; if true, it is not owned. Lord Dysart has lost his youngest brother William, whose ship, the Repulse, with all in it, an hundred and fifty! sunk in a storm on the 26th of *last December*. This shews what early and certain intelligence we get from America! Lady Bridget, whom I do not quote as gospel, told me last night that it is far from certain that Lord Mulgrave is safe. I doubt, as the Apocalypse says, the Seals of the last Book are not opened yet!

LETTER CIX.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 8, 1777.

My incorrect impromptu deserved no thanks, madam; nor should I have sent it but as it proved I left you with regret. I can snatch but moments for any thing I like. I had chalked out a more pleasing plan for this part of my life, but it is sadly traversed and I must submit. I received a most melancholy account

yesterday of my nephew, who seems sinking into idiocy, and picks up straws. This state will be free from alarms, but probably will involve me again in the care of his affairs; however, I shall wait with patience for some certainty, nor embark without better authority than I did last time. I am not more easy about the duke, whose situation is still very perilous; and if I did not know Dr. Jebb for the most despondent of men, my hopes would be small indeed; yet I by no means despair. I must count my pleasures too with my pains. My niece's match with Lord Cadogan, since she herself approves it, gives me great satisfaction. She is one of the best and most discreet young women in the world, and her husband, I am sure, is fortunate. You will think I have been mysterious, but believe me, I did not know it till yesterday. I had expected it, but was grown to think it would not be. Lord Suffolk is certainly to marry Lady Aylsford's daughter, Lady Charlotte. She cannot complain of being made a nurse, for he could have no other reason for marrying her, she is so plain, and I suppose he knows she is good or sensible. I said so to Lady Bridget Tollemache, and she replied, "How does one know whether a homely young woman is good or not before she is married?"—She is in the right.

It was Sir Charles and not George Montagu that is dead, as my hostess of St. Albans told me. Lord Villiers, who has fashioned away all he has, is to remove with his wife to his mother's, and live there. This was a great match. I am glad Lord Cadogan is past

one and twenty, and wish all my nieces may marry fathers rather than sons.

Have you read General Burgoyne's rhodomontade, in which he almost promises to cross America in a hop, step, and a jump? I thought we were cured of hyperboles. He has sent over, too, a copy of his talk with the Indians, which they say is still more supernatural. I own I prefer General Howe's taciturnity, who at least, if he does nothing, does not break his word. It is supposed the latter is sailed to Boston, and that the former has kicked Ticonderoga into one of the lakes—I don't know which, I am no geographer.

I met the new French ambassadress t'other night, at the Prince of Masserano's, at Isleworth. She is a little mouse in a cheese, not ugly, but with no manner. I am glad summer is come along with her; I began to think it was taken by a privateer.

I am not going to make a job of you, madam, nor to sell my friends to my relations, but I do wish you had Lord Villiers's house, and hope the name of the street will be no objection. It is brave, magnificently furnished, and in good taste. If Lord Ossory could get the lease, the furniture would be an immense pennyworth, as it has not been violated but by one ball and three or four assemblies. The rent, 450*l.*, is but the odd fifty beyond your present palace. It is seriously worth thinking about. There is a noble hall and staircase, an excellent drawing-room to the street, vast eating-room, and another chamber. On the first floor an anti-room, and three more very large rooms

all four quintessenced with Adamitic mode, and yet not filligreed into puerility like l'hotel de Derby. The back-stairs to the second floor, I am told, are bad; but must children and servants go to bed up the steps of the Capitol? Remember, nobody is in town, and this scarce known. I would advise Lord Ossory to seize the moment, were it but to sell again. Lord Buckingham was offered six hundred a year for his house. I would not advise anybody I loved to furnish a house like Lord Villiers's; but to buy one so furnished at an estimate second-hand, though quite new, is what I should call prudence in a man of Lord Ossory's rank and fortune. In short, I could step to you in my slippers; don't wonder I am eager. Pray send our lord to town the moment he returns, and me such an answer as I shall like.

LETTER CX.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 24, 1777.

NOT Apollo on his forked hill, nor *le Dieu Phœbus*, nor full-blown Bufo, nor Lord Bute when he sat on the altar of the Treasury and inhaled clouds of Scotch incense—ay, and of English too—could be more proud than I am with having inspired your ladyship with French verses: to be sure I should have returned them, if I was as thorough-paced a poetaster as Madame Pinto supposes. She came to see my house t'other day, and told me in Portug*hée*-French, that

"*pou*tetre she detourned me from making des petits vers." I hate to have a scrap of reputation, and had rather anybody thought I could not write my name; unless all Dame Pintos had the simplicity of Balzac's neighbour, who assured him he had a profound respect for him and *messieurs ses livres*. I wonder how a real genius supports the absurd compliments he must meet with: I know, when they tumble down to my sphere, they make me sweat.

The Duke of Gloucester is risen from the dead. You may judge, madam, how far gone he was, when all the letters were full of transports at his having sat up an hour! The duchess tells me she has been out to take the air, after not stirring out of their apartment for seven weeks. In truth I was almost as much frightened about *her*, for, after writing to some of us constantly twice a week since the commencement of the duke's illness, three posts arrived without a line from her. I had pain enough to stifle my own apprehensions and hush those of her poor daughters. Her own letter to me in the midst of her joy is the most moving I ever read. If the physicians did not confirm the accounts of his royal highness's great amendment, I should doubt that a flash of hope through such a gloom had elated their spirits too much. Probably a kind message from the King by Colonel Jennings wrought the miracle; but I must not omit a charming trait of a little girl in the house where they lodged. The duke longed for potatoes. None were to be found. A messenger was sent twenty miles. The poor little

soul hearing such a hubbub for potatoes, asked what sort of things they were. On their being described, she said not a word, but stole out to a convent where she had seen some, begged four, and brought them for the duke, who ate them all eagerly, and desired more.

Infidels may think what they will, but I am convinced it was a cherub, and conclude it has never appeared since. The famous Council that sat at Trent would have given a thousand ducats for a glimpse of inspiration a quarter as big.

You ask what I meant by *the Dorset's self*,* &c. —alas! very little; only that Ampthill would miss the fair Vernons, though Lady Holland and Lady Louisa were there. To be sure, I might have used those very words, as well as a line from Prior that did not express my meaning. The truth is, that as I generally write in a hurry, and say anything that comes into my head, it may well be that nonsense is the first to present itself, and then it is sure to take its place forwards, as it would in a stage-coach. For the future, I beg your ladyship will suppose that if I blotted my letters, they would be perfectly intelligible; but as I trust you have too much taste not to prefer natural nonsense once in ten days to the sublime galimatias which one is composing for eight months in winter quarters, I shall go on in my old way, and not endeavour to take you by surprise after prodigious preparation.—Pray observe the art of this paragraph: it implies the conquest of Ticonde-

* This quotation does not appear in the MSS. letters.—Ed.

rago. If you had not been so dull about Dorset, I should not have explained it.

I firmly believe Mezerai is the best history of France; not because I have read it, but because I have not, and it is reckoned so. I don't always find that books answer their characters: my knowledge of everything is picked up from memoirs, novels, &c. I never dealt in substantial works; and though few simple gentlemen have read more, my memory is a chaos of aughts and ends, and fit for nobody's use but my own. How should I, madam, recommend a course of reading, who hold learning very cheap, and only read for amusement, and never perused six pages of Scotch metaphysics in all my days?

I don't wonder Lord Ossory preferred Thoresby to the three old dukeries. So did I, and did not admire it much neither. Worksop is an artificial ugly forest of evergreens; Clumber aspires to the same merit, but is yet in leading strings. Welbeck is in the other extremity, a devastation. The house is the delight of *my* eyes, for it is an hospital of old portraits. Merry Sherwood is a *trist* region, and wants a race of outlaws to enliven it, and as Duchess Robin-Hood has run her country, it has little chance of recovering its ancient glory.

I think I shall step to Goodwood on Wednesday for a couple of days, if Tuesday's letters continue favourable. I had given up all thoughts of that journey; but the Conways and Mrs. Damer are going thither on their way to Mount Edgcumbe, and have

almost persuaded me—not to go to the Land's End—I have no such long holidays.

I heard to-day at Richmond that Julius Cæsar Burgonius's Commentaries are to be published in an extraordinary Gazette of three-and-twenty pages in folio, to-morrow—a counterpart to the Iliad in a nutshell! I hope we shall have a Louvre edition of King Buckingham's Ordinances on Etiquette.

LETTER CXI.

Strawberry Hill, Sep. 8, 1777, late.

I HAD written great part of a letter, madam, by snatches, as my hopes or fears predominated, and with twenty nothings that came across me, as my spirits rose: now I shall send none of it, as the nonsense would be out of season, and the black scale preponderates. But I don't make myself understood. Well, madam, we had no letters by Tuesday's mail, for the wind was contrary. Our uneasiness increased on Friday's mail too not arriving. On Sunday morning I received a letter from Paris, but could learn nothing from Trent. All yesterday my anxiety was extreme. It was not till late in the evening I learnt that the letters from Trent come by the Flemish post, and that two mails from Flanders were due; they are arrived and bring a very bad account indeed! Poor Lady Laura received a favourable letter from her mother of the 21st, but one of the 26th from the duke's

surgeon says his Royal Highness was relapsed, and so very bad, that it was thought he would be dead in four hours, though they should have some hopes if he did not go off by that time. I think he did weather that crisis, for no messenger is come; and had these letters arrived on Friday or Saturday, as they should have done, we should now be comforting ourselves on having gained three days without a messenger. I do not see why we may not equally presume, since the wind alone is the cause that we are alarmed so late. However, every relapse increases the peril, and the blow seems almost inevitable.

I have passed a most terrible evening amidst Lady Dysart and my poor girls: and I doubt it is only the beginning of sorrows—but you shall not be grieved with the details. I had, as I hope you think, answered your ladyship's last in mine that I don't send, but at present it is impossible to attend to anything but the distress in question: excuse me till I have a calmer moment. I must muster all the reason I have, when so many will want my assistance.

LETTER CXII.

Wednesday night, late, Sept. 10, 1777.

It is presuming a great deal upon your ladyship's and Lord Ossory's friendship to trouble you with my distresses: at least I ought to communicate any gleam of joy too. By a mistake, the servants at Gloucester

House sent us word yesterday morning that another mail was arrived, but had not brought one letter from Trent. This seemed decisive! every moment we expected the fatal courier! I ran down to the gate every time the bell rang, from not being able to wait for the blow. All yesterday and to-day passed in this dreadful suspense. No messenger arriving, my hopes could not help rekindling: at six I went to Hampton Court to communicate my ray of hope to my poor nieces; at seven, Mr. Hiel, the duke's chief servant here, brought us a letter of the 29th that has put life into us; the pain in the leg was diminished, his Royal Highness had drunk a glass of wine and had spoken articulately. In short, he had survived for three days, after they had thought he would not last four hours; but I think I have better founded hope. My brother and I both flattered ourselves that the pain and swelling in the leg, which had been thought so alarming, were a new crisis of the distemper, and the flux not being returned confirmed that opinion. I know some years ago his terrible humour fell on his arm with a like swelling, and it was thought an amputation was necessary, but it soon went off. It will seem an age to Friday or Saturday, and the winds may be contrary again; but sufficient to the day is the evil thereof! Wait for the Echo—my good old friend has proved faithful, when I thought even she could not articulate. There is a good deal more for her to contradict, for *my* Echo, my oracle, never repeats what she hears, but the reverse. T'other

Echo lives at Court, and always says *yes* with a broad Scotch accent. I must go to bed, for I am worn out. Good night, madam.

LETTER CXIII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 20, 1777.

THE duchess's story is so interesting, madam, that the sequel is as necessary as to a romance; but though I began it with warmth, the continuation will be told as coldly, as second parts by another hand. I am so apt to be hurried away by my first impressions, which is the mark of folly and a weak head, that I am determined never to know my own mind, till I have changed it. This may sound nonsense, but it contains a vast deal of meaning; the present solution of which is, that I shall simply relate facts, and leave their consequences to time.

The duke's amendment has been most rapid—so rapid as to shew that the humour in his blood was not the sole cause of his danger. As he began to grow better, he received a most gracious letter from the King, declaring his affection never had altered, never should. No wonder this revived his Royal Highness's spirits, and they advanced his recovery. The last letter from the surgeon his page, says he by no means thinks the duke yet out of danger. Others flattered themselves he would be able to begin his journey three days ago. I hope they will be in no hurry, nor move

him till there is no risk of a relapse. We expect more letters to-day. It is a little your ladyship's own fault, if I have talked too often on this subject.

The Howes have committed such another miscarriage, that for want of understanding it, great politicians conclude it is a *chef-d'œuvre* of finesse. The troops landed at Wilmington on the high road to Philadelphia, and then reembarked; and are believed to be sailed to Boston. One thing at least they forgot, which is, that some achievement is necessary before the meeting of Parliament, and the time presses, for there is no living any longer upon Ticonderoga and declamations, though as the Provincials have abandoned Fort Edward, no doubt there is another cargo of bombast upon the road. No honour is given to Washington from this second retreat, because it is not certain he had any share in it, and because if he had, he probably would not accept a red riband. The fact is certain, though and for, it comes from Scotland.

What a strange exit Lord Harcourt's! I am sorry for anybody's misfortune, though I cannot dislike to see Lord Nuneham earl: it is an addition to my concern for the poor father, as in all probability he perished by trying to save his dog. You know how that must touch *me*.

There has been a more dreadful accident to an inhabitant of Twickenham, and yet I am not very perfect in it. A son of Lord Hawke, who lodged here, returning from town at midnight on horseback, met a post-chaise that ran against him. The driver, trying to

check his horses, elevated the pole, and it rushed full into Mr. Hawke's body, who died in an hour in great agonies. The mystery is, that he lived here with a woman to whom he is supposed to be privately married, and therefore went here by the name of Captain Smith. Not being known, his name (which name I don't know) was found in his hat, and they fetched the poor woman to him.

Have not I sent you here great food for an evening at a shooting-party, madam? My gazettes will take leave to repose till they have another crop; for if Lord Suffolk and Lord Holderness now get the long contested garters, it will not be worth putting you to the expense of three-pence.

LETTER CXIV.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 29, 1777.

I PROMISED to have nothing to say for some time, madam, and have had nothing but the old resource of the weather. I must make *amende honorable* to our summers, for though they arrive *à la maccaroni* three months too late, they come in Eastern pomp and with southern gales, as if they were part of the riches we gather in India. I did not use to love September, with its betweenity of parched days and cold long evenings, but this has been all lustre and verdancy: I am sorry it is at its end.

The Howes are gone the Lord knows whither, and

have carried the American war with them, so there is nothing to say on that head, which is a great drawback on correspondence in the *shooting* season. General Burgoyne has had but bad sport in the woods.

The Bishop of Exeter, my niece, and Miss Keppel, have been with me for two or three days, and the Dysarts and Waldegraves have come to us all day, so I have been an old patriarch, as far as an uncle can be so. The weather and my young nieces made the gallery very splendid, for Miss Keppel is a glorious creature, and handsomer than any of her cousins.

I beg to know by the first courier whether Charles Fox is author of a copy of verses to Poverty, attributed to him in the "Annual Register." I never heard of them before.

I was in town on Tuesday, and bought a new pamphlet that pleases me exceedingly. It is called "An Unconnected Whig's Address to the Public." It comprehends in a very short way the chief points of the American contest. The author seems a good deal more attached to the Marquis than he pretends to be, but there is a great deal of truth, and not the less for the contempt it expresses of that mulish cart-horse George Grenville.

This letter is all rags; but I cannot help it. I have really nothing to say, and, as every post confirms the duke's amendment, my mind is easy; and when nothing is poured into it, nothing will come out of it. I own, there are a great many wheels within, but they

stand still, like the waterworks at Versailles, if not set in motion on some particular occasion.

I know nothing of poor Mrs. Hawke, as I have seen none of our village this week. At first they said she was gone mad, and then I heard Lord Hawke had sent for her. I don't know if either is true.

The new Duke of Norfolk's son is to be called Earl of Surrey, not of Arundel. This is to my mind, though it will be a paltry Earl of Surrey. The old duke has left everything with the title (except 3000*l.* a year to Harry Howard, who probably will be duke, and 2000*l.* a year to Lord Stourton's son, a great nephew; and they were not Howard estates), and has tied up his drunken heir so that he cannot remove a picture. He has given him, too, a family estate in Norfolk, repurchased from Lord Petre. To Lady Smith, who lived with him twenty years, he gives a trumpery annuity of four score pounds a year, as if she were his old coachman! I remember the present Lord Pomfret, when his mother thought she had paid all his debts and discovered still more, wrote to her that he could compare himself only to *Cerberus*, who, when one head was cut off, another sprung up in its room. This was a very new piece of mythology. The house of Howard is not a bit like the old story of Cerberus, alias the Hydra, for so many of their heads were cut off formerly that it looks as if they never would have a head worth wearing on their shoulders again.

LETTER CXV.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 8, 1777.

WRITE to Sir George about my own writings!—sure, madam, you do not think I would for the world! What in the name of fortune could I write but affectation and false modesty?—and then he writes again, and is more civil; and then I protest I cannot spell my own name; and then—and then, I am in for a new correspondence. I beg to be excused.

I have time to write to nobody but on business, or to a few that are used to my ways, and with whom I don't mind whether I stand on my head or my heels. I beg your honour's pardon, for you are one to whom I can write comfortably, though I know you keep my letters; and it is, I must say, no small merit or courage that I still continue to write to you, without having the fear of sense before my eyes; but since neither Aristotle nor Bossu have laid down rules for letters, and consequently have left them to their native wildness, I shall persist in saying whatever comes uppermost, and the less I am understood by anybody but the person I write to, so much the better. St. Paul is my model for letter-writing, who being a man of fashion, and very unaffected, never studies for what he shall say, but in one paragraph takes care of Timothy's soul, and in the next of his own cloak.

However, though I will not engage with him in person, I must beg your good ladyship to assure Sir George, I mean Lord Macartney, how very sensible I

am of his partiality to me; which at least I will never forfeit, for you may safely take your Bible oath to him that I have entirely forsworn being an author. "*Quod scripsi, scripsi;*" and the things must shift for themselves; but the clock has struck threescore; and if I have not written very foolishly, I will take care that I will not. My outward man is so weak and shattered, that in all probability the inward has its share in the *délabrement;* but as of that I can be no judge myself, and as I am sure nobody will tell me, it is rather wiser not to risk exposing myself. The catalogue of my collection will be no more worth reading than one of Christie's auction-books, and the prints are not yet half finished. Lord Macartney shall have one as soon as any man; he has always been kind to me; I have a very sincere regard for him; and particularly for his infinite goodnature, which I value in him, and in anybody, more than their parts. I rejoice in his good fortune, especially as it is due to his amiable qualities, for what is so glorious as to have the governed reward their governor! The gratitude of a whole people is the noblest of all epitaphs.

As your ladyship is so punctual in answering my questions, it is not seemly that I should be less exact. Nay, I shall imitate you so servilely, that my answers will be individually the same as yours—*I don't know.* I neither know whether Lord Harcourt's dog broke its heart, nor whether their Royal Highnesses of Cumberland are going to part. The French mystery that you say is not tellable, I suppose implies that his

Majesty's first surgeon has had a hand in the future dauphin. Truly, I thought that any indecency relative to divinity or government might be told, if accompanied with proper gravity. I have heard the late Lord Lyttelton discuss points of midwifery with the solemnity of a Solon. I don't mean that I am curious for the particulars. Louis XIII. was made to believe that he had begotten two sons, though he never knew how; and if his successor has been persuaded that the talisman is removed, I have no doubt but the Queen will convince him that she is as fruitful, as the good of the monarchy requires. *En attendant*, and with all due respect for Lady Clermont's *intelligence*, I have little faith in conceptions that have been so long immaculate.

You ask when will American news come? A cargo is come, and if you are a sound courtier, madam, you will believe every tittle, though it comes from Margate, which is not exactly the side of our island nearest to America. What is more strange, is, that though every one of our generals has gained a separate victory, every one of them is too modest to have sent any account of it. However, one captain of a sloop happened to be at the very point and moment of intelligence when all the accounts arrived at New York. In London, I hear, there are very contradictory letters. I am assured too that an officer is arrived, but the Gazette was so afflicted for the Margravine Dowager of Bareith, that it forgot to let us know what he says. In fine, it is believed that General Howe was on his

march to Philadelphia; all the rest is thought to be hartshorn for the stocks and the lottery tickets. Don't you begin to think, madam, that it is pleasanter to read history than to live it? Battles are fought, and towns taken in every page, but a campaign takes six or seven months to hear, and achieves no great matter at last. I dare to say Alexander seemed to the coffee-houses of Pella a monstrous while about conquering the world. As to this American war, I am persuaded it will last to the end of the century; and then it is so inconvenient to have all letters come by the post of the ocean! People should never go to war above ten miles off, as the Grecian States used to do. Then one might have a Gazette every morning at breakfast. I hope Bengal will not rebel in my time, for then one shall be eighteen months between hearing that the army has taken the field and is gone into winter-quarters.

My nephew, George Cholmondeley (for I am uncle to all the world), dined here to-day, and repeated part of a very good copy of verses from Sheridan to Mrs. Crewe. Has your ladyship seen them? I trust they will not long retain their M.S.-hood.

LETTER CXVI.

Arlington Street, Oct. 28, 1777.

THE Ursulines of Trent seem to have prayed for more than the duke's life, for he is not emaciated nor

yellow; and though one sees he has been ill, his voice is strong and his spirits good, and nothing remains of his distemper but a swelled leg; and that is decreased since his arrival. The duchess retains more traces of her sufferings; is much leaner, and looks older, though not so much as I expected. Nothing is settled about his going to Court. Pray remember, madam, that these are stars in eclipse, or I would not talk of them, for it is very vulgar to be interested about princes and princesses.

I know no more of America than the ministers do. It is not quite fashionable to talk of that. The tone is, just to ask with an air of anxiety, if there is anything new, and then to be silent. A general has a fine opportunity now, for if he was to reduce a pigeon-house, I believe the King would go to St. Paul's to hear a *Te Deum*. The accession-day was not full, and those that came are gone again. The town is as empty and dull as Newmarket between the meetings. The only event I have heard since I arrived is Lady Melbourne's being brought to bed of two girls at seven months, and they are both dead; but *she* had secured a son first. Oh! yes, the Czarina has acknowledged the Duchess of Kingston, and taken as much care of her in her yacht, in the inundation, as tender King James did of his dogs and his trunk when he was shipwrecked in Scotland. This great princess has been rather uncivilly treated by her brother the Emperor of China. She proposed to him to lay waste (a modern way of making peace) the country that separates their

empires, lest they should quarrel for it. His Tartar Majesty did not send so much as a card in return; but he did write to all the Russians, I don't know by what post, to tell them that a woman, *soi-disant* Empress of Russia, had proposed to him to depopulate a country belonging to him, but that he knew better what to do with it. Strange ignorance to suppose that inhabitants enrich a country! In conclusion, his Majesty expresses his surprise that so great and wise a nation as the Russians should still submit to be governed by a creature that murdered her own husband: and yet we call the Chinese a polished nation! Mercy on us, if crowned heads were to tell one another their own!

I shall return to Strawberry in a day or two, where I think I cannot have less to tell your ladyship than from the capital.

LETTER CXVII.

October 30, 1777.

I MUST confess, madam, I cannot agree with your ladyship in thinking Miss Barley, and Miss Oats, and Miss Rawhides, and Miss Beesom, and Miss Soap, &c., so much in the wrong for not consorting with a dancing-master's daughters. The young ladies above-named are of the best families in Ampthill, ancient gentry, that settled there before the Conquest. I know a dancing-master's is reckoned a more liberal

profession, and more likely to advance him to the Irish peerage. But does Mr. Kit pay in proportion to the American war? Has he signed any address for it? Will not people learn to dance, though we should never recover the Colonies? By the good people of England, does not his Majesty mean his faithful gentry, yeomanry, and tradesmen of the kingdom? In his speech to Parliament does he ever think of dancing-masters and hair-dressers? Are they not aliens? Is his Majesty ever in their books? Or are the nobility, who are in debt to everybody else? Indeed, indeed, madam, I approve the spirit of the young ladies; they feel themselves; and I dare to say could scratch out the eyes of every rebellious American on the face of the earth.

The post is come in from that part of the world, and Lord Howe and General Howe were, very well thank you! two months ago. General Washington has received a defeat in the city of London, and General Burgoyne on the banks of the Seine. The Gazette itself knows no more.

I do not know that the Duchess of D. has been positively ill. She thought her nerves were much affected, but it proved to be only a disorder on her spirits, occasioned by her being tired of Chatsworth. She is much better since her removal.

I am ignorant of what Mr. Morrice got by his sister's death, and whether she has got anything. I have been a week in town without being a jot more informed in any one point, and therefore shall return

to-morrow to my castle, whence, at least, my ignorance will be more excusable.

LETTER CXVIII.

November 13, 1777.

I HAVE had nothing to add to my accounts, madam, nor have now more than you will see in the papers.

There is come in a ship from Halifax, which is not next door to Philadelphia, the captain of which was told by another captain from New York, that Sir W. Howe had had an engagement with Washington, and had the advantage; Washington having lost, some say, fifteen hundred men—some five hundred men. But the singular part of this story is, that captain of captains says the action passed on the 25th, and not the 11th, which does not prove that the New York Gazette of the 29th was very authentic. In short, it is the House that Jack built, except that it loses a story in the hands of every new builder. Nobody knows what to make of such a cloud, which has occasioned as much reasoning, and consequently as much false reasoning as ever was heard.

What is believed is, that Captain Tollemache, Lady Bridget's husband, is killed in a duel at New-York, by a Captain Pennington, on a foolish quarrel about humming a tune. There is strange fatality attends the House of Tollemache: two brothers drowned and a

third killed! My poor niece, Lady Dysart, who is all goodness and good-nature, will be very unhappy as she was about the last brother! But indeed if she can love the eldest, it would not be just to be indifferent to the others; though, except the second, I never heard much good of any of them. I know which is the worst.

I have seen George twice since his return from Ampthill. You have done him a great deal of good; he was in spirits yesterday; this morning there was a little relapse. He is gone, I believe, to Lady Holland; but returns to-morrow, as his mother is come to town not in a good way.

I hope you saw and was delighted with the parody of Burgoyne's Dispatch. I never saw more humour, nor better kept up. It is as much admired as it deserves. General Swagger is said to be entrenched at Saratoga, but I question whether he will be left at leisure to continue his Commentaries: one Arnold is mighty apt to interrupt him.

Thursday morning.

I AM côme to town to take possession of Berkeley Square; and your ladyship's letter of the 9th, which, N.B. I received *but* yesterday, gives me great hopes of finding you in town. How happy I shall be if you are, and that I may catch a glimpse of you after dinner!

Your ladyship is most obliging, and I will let the Strawberries know the honour you intended them, but alas! they go into Yorkshire on Wednesday for two months. *I* shall be quite content with the party already named of yourselves, your two lady daughters, and Mr. Selwyn. You have all seen how likely I am to tumble on my nose, and therefore I shall not be ashamed if I do; but I do not wish for more witnesses; and as I cannot stand to shew my house, you will be so good as to excuse my sitting; and I should grow confused if I had new honours to do, and could not perform them.

If it is possible that Madame d'Andelot should know that there is such an antediluvian as I remaining, why would not your ladyship be so good as to say, that Strulbrugs are dispensed with from making visits? if I must, I must: so the first dark night, I will order my coffin and pair, and *appear* to her.

I want to ask when your ladyship will do me the honour to dine in my burying-ground; but till I have been at the Princess's to-night, I do not know when I shall be at liberty to take up my bed and walk. I wish it might be this day se'nnight, but I will send to your ladyship to-morrow morning and settle it.

Tuesday night.

I was excessively mortified, madam, when I found I had kept your ladyship so inconveniently from going to Lady Ravensworth. Indeed, by Lord Palmerston's

staying, I had concluded you were not going out, and having seen so very little of you this year, I was glad to indulge myself. I am sure you are good enough to excuse so involuntary a fault.

Your purse is so pretty, that I should like it, if it had no superior merit, it has no rival in my estimation but another work of the same fingers, your ladyship's kind note. When written to such a decrepit skeleton, I should think it mere charity, had you not always been too partial to me. Still it is pleasant, when one has outlived one's self, not to have survived the kindness of one's friends; and I will not think that age and pain are terrible evils, when they have neither shaken your friendship, madam, nor weakened my memory of the gratitude I owe you.

I was very ill, madam, after I left your ladyship, and I am well again, without having done anything to occasion either. I only mention this to shew you that my disorders are of no consequence, nor worth minding; and therefore, good as you are, I do beg of you to take no notice of them, for it makes me appear very ridiculous to myself, as I can give no account of what is the matter with me. It will indeed oblige me seriously, if you will never say anything about it, for if it is fancy, I do not desire to be indulged in it.

I wish your ladyship joy on last night's victory; General Conway has just been here in great spirits and told me of it.

Thursday.

I cannot think of going to the play to-night, madam; nor can be out of the way of hearing the first news that shall come. I have done what was right; I approved and applauded Mr. Conway's going instantly; but I cannot pretend to be easy now he is gone. My feelings for my friends are stronger and more sincere than my philosophy; and great is the difference between advising them to act as they ought, and being indifferent to the consequence.

LETTER CXIX.

Arlington Street, Nov. 6, 1777.

YOUR ladyship will be so well content with knowing that nothing ill happened to Mr. Fitzpatrick,* in

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* It may be interesting to hear what this gallant soldier, accomplished gentleman, and politician at the same time, himself felt on the subject of this war. I, therefore, insert a few letters written feelingly and familiarly to his sister-in-law, Lady Ossory, about this time.

New York, June 2, 1777.

MY DEAR LADY OSSORY,—I have only just time to write this, to let you know that we landed here on the 27th of May, after a passage of little more than eight weeks, during which I was perfectly well in health, but *ennuyé* to a degree not to be conceived by any body who is not on board a ship, which of all miseries is really the most insupportable. We are in the utmost hurry and confusion, being ordered to join the rest of the army immediately at Brunswick, a town about forty miles from this, and I shall leave the letter for the packet, which they say will sail in a few days: I fancy it will wait only till the army has taken the field. You cannot imagine anything half so beautiful as this country: it is impossible to conceive anything so delightful. Lady Holland (in spite of her politics), would, I am sure, feel for it, if she could see the

a battle of three days, that you will not repine at his having gathered no laurels in them. He really was not engaged any one of the three days, nor Lord Chewton neither; not that the latter was ill, or less from want of spirit in your *beau-frère;* but as neither of them have any *fanfaronade* about them, they did

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ruin and desolation we have introduced into the most beautiful, and I believe, once the happiest part of the universe.

Pray be so good as to tell her, I shall write to her by the next opportunity; but we are now really so hurried, that I have scarce a moment to spare. For politics, I refer my brother to a letter I have written to Charles, whom I wish he would caution not to exhibit it everywhere, for many reasons. I hope you will be charitable enough to write to me as often as you can, and make all my friends do the same: in my situation any news is acceptable, and in all situations hearing from those we love, is pleasant. I have just seen Lord Chewton, who is grown thin, but looks very well: he desires to send his respects, and is most extremely impatient to pay you them in person—indeed, every body seems most heartily tired of this business, which is in reality one of the most disagreeable scenes altogether that can be imagined; the only merit of it is, that it is new to us, and that it is certainly one of the most extraordinary things that ever one could have been witness to since the creation of the world. If I thought I should continue here till the *dénouement de la pièce,* I should have a very distant prospect to look forward to, indeed; and yet I do not know that I have any reason to flatter myself that I shall not.

I am not surprised at the great aversion people have in general to the inhabitants of this part of the globe: their manners are so different from our own, and so far from everything that is pleasing or agreeable, that as far as I can judge from the few I have seen, and which I am assured are a very just type of the whole, they are to us certainly the most unpleasant, formal, precise, disagreeable people in the world, yet they are exactly what I had always supposed them. But I do not see that this is a sufficient reason for extirpating the whole race, which seems now generally understood to be our object. The difficulty of accomplishing this desirable purpose seems the only objection people here have to it; and we are perpetually exclaiming against the people for being so unjust as to hate and detest us cordially, and so very cruel as to do us every kind of mischief and injury that they can! Adieu, my dear Lady

not hot-headedly thrust themselves into more danger than their companions; and as General Washington was so easily beaten without a stroke being struck, Mr. Fitzpatrick and Lord Chewton could not acquire

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Ossory, I am very impatient to hear from you, and flatter myself you will be good enough not to forget me. Yours, most affectionately,

R. F.

Pray give my love to all my friends at Ampthill, where I suppose you now are, and present *mes respects à Madame la Duchesse votre voisine.*

New York, July 12, 1777.

A MILLION of thanks to you, my dear Lady Ossory, for the very kind and charming letter you were so good as to send me by Lord Rawdon. Among many which I received from my friends, this was the only one that was at all comfortable, as they all seemed to depend upon one another for having sent all the news that was stirring, and by that means, sent me hardly any. A letter from you to me can never require an apology of any sort, whatever the contents may be; but if you could conceive what a treasure I consider it, and what a value everything has which proves that, at this distance, one is still remembered by the persons one loves, you could never for a moment fancy that I could think your letter uninteresting. Give me leave, therefore, to thank you most sincerely and cordially for it, as well as for the many other instances of your goodness to me, which have, I assure you, made too deep impression upon me ever to allow me to forget them. But sincerely I hope you never will suppose a letter, whatever it may contain, can fail of being acceptable news—scandal, or anything in the world—though, I confess, I think the *Citron's* scandal is so much her own, and so little to be depended upon, that as she can never know whether the histories she deals out are really the current scandal of the town, or merely the fruits of her own pretty imagination, and if they are the latter, I confess I feel very little curiosity about them. I dare say you will think I say this because I dislike the thing she said of a person's partiality for one of her nephews, but I assure you that is not the case; for if I was *dans le cas* to dislike it, I should not believe it a bit the more from her saying it, especially as I know she said the same thing of the same person, with regard to another of her nephews, without the least foundation in the world. Anything certainly is good to fill a letter from Europe to America, but excepting politics, you must confess that it is impossible that America should be able to furnish any materials whatever. If I were to give you

more honour than General Howe himself, who has been presented with a victory that he has not earned, and of which he probably will not hear this month.

In short, not only no confirmation is come of the

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an account of my life, it would be only an unintelligible jargon of military nonsense; and if I were to overflow the paper with my thoughts, they are of a kind that could only serve to give you *des vapeurs;* for, to tell you the truth, nothing in the world can be so disagreeable and so odious to me, as being obliged to serve in this execrable war, exclusive of the *désagrément* of being banished from society, and cut off from all those connexions and friendships, without which *la vie humaine* has not much left to recommend it. But if I continue in this style, I perceive I shall immediately do the very thing I was declaring I would avoid: I must therefore endeavour to change the subject.

I am astonished at the news of La Fayette: I dare say he will be much admired for his project in France, whatever Lord Clermont may say. We are here preparing to embark, to my great sorrow, for the sea is my aversion; and a crowd of officers in a transport in this hot climate will not contribute much to make it less disagreeable. Our destination is unknown to us; people in general seem afraid of its being southward, dreading the heat of the weather. I am very indifferent as to that myself, as I find very little inconvenience from heat. We have had here already some days far hotter than any I have ever felt, and I do not find the climate disagree with me at all, as I never was in better health in my life. I am much obliged to Mr. Walpole for the honour of his *souvenir*, and beg you will make my acknowledgments. Adieu, my dear Lady Ossory. The finishing of a letter at this immense distance has a kind of resemblance to taking leave, which gives a very unpleasant sensation, *mais enfin il faut finir.* Adieu. I flatter myself I need not say how sincerely and affectionately I am yours. R. F.

Camp, near the head of Elk River,
Maryland, September 1.

THE most unfortunate accident in the world, my dear Lady Ossory, prevented me sending my letter by the last packet, and I was obliged to trust them to the conveyance of a man I never saw, when I left New York; so God knows if ever they have been received, as I got none from England by the packet which arrived a few days ago. I flatter myself I have some *en chemin*, but perhaps it may be long before I get them. We have had a most tedious voyage from New York to this part of the continent, where we have found no enemy to trouble us

New York Gazette, but the Ministers say they have traced the two ships that brought the news to Liverpool and Glasgow, and have discovered that they were sent by Panchaud on some stock-jobbing errand. If

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hitherto, as our antagonists have very wisely adopted a system of avoiding fighting. I flatter myself the persons who are so good as to interest themselves about me, have no great reason to be apprehensive for me, for the climate, though reckoned unhealthy, is very much otherwise with regard to me. I have not written to my brother, as the packet is not the best method of conveying politics, and this packet literally can contain no news of any consequence. "*La saison s'avance et nous n'avançons guères;*" but the thing is no longer worth mentioning now, for there can be but one opinion upon the subject, and I think it amounts very near to a demonstration; *en attendant*, the scene we are witnesses to is the most vile and execrable that can be conceived. A soldier of ours was yesterday taken by the enemy beyond our lines, who had chopped off an unfortunate woman's fingers in order to plunder her of her rings. I really think the return of this army to England is to be dreaded by the peaceable inhabitants, and will occasion a prodigious increase of business for Sir J. Fielding and Jack Ketch: I am sure the office of the latter can never find more deserving objects for its exercise.

Lord Chewton was very ill during our voyage, and is yet hardly recovered: his good nature is heartily disgusted at these scenes of iniquity and horror, and he is impatient for the winter, when he will probably return to England with Lord Cornwallis. I intended writing to Lady Holland, but as the packet is to be made up to-day I am afraid I shall not have time: I beg you will give my love to her, and assure her I will write to her by the next opportunity.

A letter from America containing no news of the war will appear rather an extraordinary thing, but the present situation of it is so little changed from what the last accounts carried, that there is really scarce anything worth mentioning. As to our conjectures, they are not worth much, for the maps give us very inaccurate accounts of the country, and our spies (if we have any) give us very little intelligence of our enemy: we heard different stories every moment, but none to be depended upon. General Washington dined here with a great attendance of officers two days before our arrival, and is now supposed to be between this and Philadelphia, which is about sixty miles from this place. The inhabitants are almost all fled from their houses and have driven their cattle with them; so we do not live very luxuriously, though in a country that has

this is true, they have good reason to be peevish, for never were people more egregiously duped. I have not time to say more now, but I am happy to take off some anxiety from Ampthill.

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every appearance of plenty, and is more beautiful than can be conceived, wherever the woods are at all cleared. Adieu, my dear Lady Ossory. Pray remember me to my sisters and my nieces, and let me hear from you as often as I can. Yours most sincerely and affectionately,

R. F.

Philadelphia, Oct. 26, 1777.

Dear Lady Ossory,—From the very long time that we have not been heard of by our friends in Europe, they will certainly either totally forget that we exist, or perhaps conclude that we do really exist no longer; but as I flatter myself the first is not so, I likewise flatter myself that you will be glad to hear that the latter is not the case: in short, I am alive and well, and happy to have at last an opportunity of thanking you for your kindness to a *malheureux exilé*. I shall not trouble you with politics or a history of the campaign, for which, if you have any curiosity, I must refer you to others of my correspondents, or to the Gazette if you please, though I question if the last will reveal the whole truth of the melancholy posture of our affairs in this part of the world. I should be very unlucky if I had changed my sentiments upon these subjects at present, as the Duchess of B. has been erroneously informed, for I should have the mortification of finding everything going from bad to worse every moment. We arrived at this place above a month since, though we cannot possibly be said to be in possession of it yet, as the ships cannot get up the river, and, in spite of all their and our exertions, do not seem more likely to succeed in that object than they were three days after our arrival.

I cannot say much for the town of Philadelphia, which has no view but the straightness and uniformity of the streets. Till we arrived I believe it was a very populous city, but at present it is very thinly inhabited, and that only by the *canaille* and the Quakers, whose peaceable disposition has prevented their taking up arms, and consequently has engaged them in our interests, by drawing upon them the displeasure of their countrymen. If what we hear of General Burgoyne's *situation* be true, and that he and his whole army are literally prisoners, I think neither the war nor the Ministry can possibly last another campaign. A few days after our battle at the Brandy-wine, a surgeon, who came from the enemy to dress

LETTER CXX.

Friday night, late, Dec. 5, 1777.

SEND for Lord Chatham! they had better send for General Washington, madam,—or at least for our troops back, which would be a little less disgraceful than having them returned on their hands. There

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the wounded Americans who had fallen into our hands, brought me a very kind message from Monsieur de la Fayette. He had been wounded himself in the action, and sent to inquire after me particularly, because it had happened that we had literally been opposite to each other in the engagement. Our danger, however, had been very inconsiderable, as it happened luckily for us that the enemy made less resistance where we attacked than in any other part of the battle. The consequences of this victory have been exactly like those of the others. In short, it is really melancholy to see so much misery occasioned, and so many troops sacrificed every day to so little purpose.

I am much obliged to you for the hint you gave me upon the subject of my leisure hours, and for the future am determined to follow your advice. I am in hopes of seeing you this winter: have you had a presentiment upon the subject? You know they are always infallible. Lord Lindsey is arrived here, but his *ton* is too bad even for this part of the world, and nobody can bear him. Sir John W. informs me that *notre chère tante* Lady G. is very ill, which her nephews on this side the Atlantic seem not much to care about. An unfortunate accident has happened here: Captain Tollemache is killed in a duel by a wrongheaded officer in the Guards, a Mr. Pennington, whom he brought over in his ship. As it happened at New York, we do not know the particulars, but everybody concludes the latter to have been in the wrong, from his general character. I cannot help pitying Lady Bridget, though she is a detestable woman. I am quite of your opinion with regard to the poetry you sent me, and lament that the Duchess of D.'s panegyrist is so inferior to the satirist; but unfortunately that is commonly the case. The packet is to be ready to sail to-morrow, and our letters must be sent immediately. Adieu, *ma chère sœur!* I beg you will thank Car* for the very kind letter she wrote me, which I would certainly have answered, if I had had notice of the packet's sailing sooner; but I really

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* Miss Vernon, afterwards Mrs. R. P. Smith.

is another express come to-day with the loss of Ticonderoga, which is very credible when there was no army left to defend it. I suppose Quebec will follow. General Howe must probably return to defend New York. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

I must own I had not sorted my feelings into different drawers, and therefore cannot one day pull out one, and grieve for burning a town, or destroying a beautiful province; and the next day take out an assortment of compassion for an army that marched under such a savage proclamation as Burgoyne's. The accounts that are come, own, that the provincials have treated him and his fellow-prisoners with the utmost humanity. On the other hand, I must contradict myself and do justice to General Clinton, who spared all he could, when he took the two forts. We have

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now have not time. Pray desire her to say the same from me to Lady W. the first time she writes, and tell Louisa that, though I cannot wonder at her refusing Mr. H., I beg she will leave off that foolish practice. Adieu, dear Lady Ossory. Yours most affectionately,

R. F.

My love to Anne.

Philadelphia, March 3, 1778.

Dear Lady Ossory,—I sit down to write you a very short letter, just to return you a thousand thanks for those you have been so good as to write to me; but, from the last I wrote, I am sure you cannot expect any entertainment from this place, which is not become more lively since the last account I sent you of it. I am much obliged to you, too, for Mr. W.'s letter, who you say is quite wild, which I am sure he cannot be more than I am, upon the subject of politics. *J'enrage quand j'y pense.* I shall have, however, soon the satisfaction of being delivered from the most disagreeable situation I was ever in, as well as the happiness of seeing you again. My brother will inform you *que mon parti est pris*, and I flatter myself that both he and you will think I am in the right.

We are all astonished here at Lord Waldegrave's being so punc-

been horribly the aggressors; and I must rejoice that the Americans are to be free, as they had a right to be, and as I am sure they have shewn they deserve to be. I cannot answer for what our troops would have done, had they conquered; and less what the spirit would have done that sent them. Lord Chatham is an Irishman: he would recal the troops and deny the independence of the Americans. He is in the right to recal an army that cannot conquer it; but a country that will not be conquered, and that cannot be, is but in an odd sort of state of dependence. He seems to be afraid of their condescending even to trade with us. No, madam, we do not want Ministers that would protract our difficulties. I look on them but as beginning now, and am far from thinking that there is any man, or set of men, able enough to extricate us. I

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tilious; I am sorry for it, because I am afraid it will be an additional pretence for starving poor Chewton. Sir John W. has got the King's leave to go to England, but I am afraid he thinks it too late to set out and to return for the next campaign, which I, as well as the whole army, am very sorry for, as he is the *fléau* and *ennui* of all his acquaintance. I hope the revival of the Citron's flame gives a good turn at least to her politics. Your patience, I am afraid, will be worn out; but at last you may depend upon it the event will justify our opinions, and will end in the utter confusion of the Ministers, and, I am really afraid, in the utter destruction of the country: the first, however, I shall sincerely rejoice at, and it will be some consolation not to have been instrumental in the last. It is ridiculous to send so short a letter from this part of the globe, *mais que voulez-vous*, and while we vegetate in this place nothing can be expected. This is certainly the last letter I shall bore you with from it, and therefore I beg you will forgive the dulness of it, and believe me, my dear Lady Ossory, yours most truly and sincerely,

R. F.

Pray give my love to Anne and Gertrude, since she is so gracious as to accept of it.

own there are very able Englishmen left, but they happen to be on t' other side of the Atlantic. If his Majesty hopes to find them here, I doubt he will be mistaken: it is not worth his while to change hands.

The debates have continued warm in the House of Commons. Charles Fox on Wednesday told Lord George he hoped to see him brought to a second trial. Burke having called Wedderburne Lord George's counsel, Wedderburne grew outrageous, told Burke he knew not how to behave with good manners, but he would be respected by him both in public and private. Burke went out of the House, and, they say, made a signal to Wedderburne to follow him; but their friends interposed and it was made up. Yesterday Charles and the attorney-general had high words that did not go so far. Lord Chatham was in the other House to-day, but I know nothing of what was done.

Mr. Acland is not dead, but wounded; and his poor wife is gone to him at Saratoga, from Quebec.

I am grateful for your ladyship's hint, and, indeed, did hope to be invited to keep my gambols at Ampthill, which I do most stedfastly design; though I was alarmed last night with a swelled finger, but it is gone; and this evening it has snowed. However, I am not in a mood to be disheartened easily; and as your ladyship's spirits seem to be affected with every sort of wind that blows, *my propriety* shall come and represent the necessity of submission to what one wishes, and endeavour to comfort you for the loss of everybody that you don't know.

Dec. 6th.

Thank you, madam, for the extracts, which are sensible indeed. I have time to say no more of them. Yesterday was warm again in the Lords. The Earls of Chatham and Gower squabbled again on the Indians, and the former was in the wrong again. He talked of accusing my Lord of York of his libel, and was not in the wrong. It looks as if we were to continue the war; but as it is tiresome to wait two or three months for a skirmish, we are to have a war with France, of which we can have news every day.

Pray return my compliments, madam, to Lady Gertrude, and tell her I am impatient to kiss her, though I kissed a princess last night that was my own flesh and blood—but is it *proper* to own so much?

P.S.—Sir Charles Bunbury declared off from the Court on Thursday, and Lord Northington voted in the minority yesterday. These are the *rat*ifications of misfortune.

LETTER CXXI.

Thursday night, Dec. 11, 1777.

I DO not write, madam, to tell you politics; you will hear them better from Lord Ossory: nor indeed have I words to paint the abject impudent poltroonery of the Ministers, or the blockish stupidity of the Parliament.

Lord North yesterday declared he should during the recess prepare to lay before the Parliament proposals of

peace to be offered to the Americans! *I trust we have force enough to bring forward an accommodation.* They were his very words. Was ever proud insolent nation sunk so low! Burke and Charles Fox told him the administration thought of nothing but keeping their places; and so they will, and the members their pensions, and the nation its infamy. Were I Franklin, I would order the Cabinet Council to come to me at Paris with ropes about their necks, and then kick them back to St. James's.

Well, madam, as I told Lord Ossory t'other day, I am satisfied,—Old England is safe, that is, America, whither the true English retired under Charles the First:—this is Nova Scotia, and I care not what becomes of it.

I have just been at Percy. The four first acts are much better than I expected, and very animated. There are good situations, and several pretty passages; but not much nature. There is a fine speech of the heroine to her father, and a strange sermon against Crusades, that ends with a description of the Saviour, who died for our sins. The last act is very ill-conducted, unnatural and obscure. Earl Douglas is a savage ruffian. Earl Percy is converted by the virtue of his mistress, and she is *love and virtue* in the supreme degree. There is a prologue and epilogue about fine ladies and fine gentlemen, and feathers and buckles, and I don't doubt every word of both, Mr. Garrick's, for they are common-place, and written for the upper gallery. It was very moderately performed,

but one passage against the *odious Scot* Douglas was loudly applauded, and shewed that the mob have no pensions.

Our brave Administration have turned out Lord Jersey and Mr. Hopkins, which will certainly convince all America and all Europe, that they are *not* afraid; though I saw one of their tools to-day who assured me they are,—nay, he said (and *he* is somebody) that if the Congress insists on the Ministry being changed it must be. I do not believe the Congress will do them so much honour; but I answered, "Sir, if the Congress should make that condition it will not be from caring about it, but to make the pacification impossible. I do not believe they care much more for the opposition than for the administration; but they must know that the opposition could not, would not, grant terms, that this Administration should refuse."

Adieu, madam! I am at last not sorry you have no son, and your daughters, I hope, will be married to Americans, and not in this dirty, despicable island!

LETTER CXXII.

December 17, 1777.

THERE can be nothing more amiable or more just than your ladyship's reproof to me for forgetting your *sons*. I could excuse myself more easily to Lord Ossory than to you; and, in truth, my mind is so

narrow and contracted by all I have seen and see, that those I love occupy the whole remaining space; like a small map, only the chief rivers are set down, and not all the rivulets. It was this partial humour, and not what you are pleased to dignify with the name of *proper pride*, that made me so cold to the Earl Lord Ossory found with me. I just contrive to keep within the bounds of cool civility to those I do not wish to see. Mr. Beauclerc told me t'other day he wondered I received everybody that came to see me. I told him it was very little inconvenience, for those I was not glad to see, found little encouragement to come often.

As I have no new news to send your ladyship, for Captain Craig has only brought the confirmation of Burgoyne's capitulation, I should have deferred my apology for some days, were I not impatient to mention what interests me much, as it regards your ladyship and our lord. I called on Lady Holland last night, and thought she looked ill. I afterwards found Lady Payne at Lady Di's, and Mrs. Dixon, both whom I had seen with Lady Holland. They were both very uneasy about her: she has been blooded four or five times, and it was to be repeated this morning; and Lady Payne told me Dr. Warren is not quite satisfied with her case. Lady Payne wishes much to have her go abroad, but does not think she will be persuaded. In short, I promised to tell Lord Ossory her apprehensions, and I am sure he will be so good as not to take notice of my information, especially as it might

alarm his sister herself. She is so delicate, that it is better to be too circumspect than the contrary.

Craufurd is again confined with the gout, and ought to be closer confined. He has heard that Taaffe has been cured by Buzaglo, and sent for the former, who told him fairly that Buzaglo had removed his gout in four hours, but said, the operation would kill any man less strong. The remedy struck him, and he totally forgot the reasoning; and when I urged his debility, he vowed he had rather die, than have the gout. Oh! said I, I shall not contest with you, for people often contradict one till they grow determined upon points, that at first they scarce laid any stress upon; and you shall not kill yourself only to confute me—but he will have no more patience to be boiled to death, than with the gout; and when he has simmered half an hour, he will despair, and try the next quack he hears of.

You will please to tell me when you would have me to Ampthill. I cannot well be there before the middle of next week, but from that moment I am at your ladyship's command for what part of the holydays will be most convenient to you, and shall not engage myself anywhere else, till you have disposed of me. *Anywhere else* sounds magnificent, but really means no where but Park Place. I am too ancient to go about like morrice-dancers, to every house that is open at Christmas; nor but where they are so good as to have indulgence, and let me come away, if I feel any menaces of the gout.

LETTER CXXIII.

Tuesday morning, Dec. 23, 1777.

I HAVE just received a very good answer to my message; Lady Holland is much better. I will call on her myself before I come to Ampthill, which I propose shall be on Friday or Saturday—but man proposes, and fog disposes. If it is as dark as to-day or last Saturday, I shall not be able to find my way. I was forced on Saturday to light a candle at eleven in the morning, in my room forwards, to read the newspapers; and it is not the breadth of a hair lighter this morning. If this Egyptian obscurity does not produce snow, I shall not mind it.

I know nothing, madam, though we have so many affairs on our hands, that almost every sea and every wind might bring us news of our concerns. It is well we have heads so capacious and hearts so stout, as to hold all these matters, and not mind it, if the world tumbles to pieces about our ears!

I suppose you know Lady Louisa Leveson is to marry Mr. Macdonald.

I have been at another new play, the Roman Sacrifice. It is the old story of Junius Brutus, without a tolerable line. I went to see it, as I had never seen Henderson, and thought I could judge him better in a new part; but either the part was so bad, or he wants to copy, that I should not have found out he was at all superior to all the other actors. Upon

my word I have not a syllable more to say, and am your ladyship's, &c.

LETTER CXXIV.

Dec. 27, 1777.

THE misfortune has happened, madam; the poor Bishop died this morning. The Duchess is gone to Windsor to try to bring her sister to town, who insists on staying there till he is buried, and every one of their windows looks on St. George's Chapel! but I will not sadden your ladyship with the distress I am witness to! It is impossible for me to leave them at present, or my brother. Lady Laura, who had lived a great deal with the Bishop and loved him like a father, is as afflicted as his own children—though they have additional cause to regret him. I have been so taken up with this calamity, that I have not had a moment to call on Lady Holland, of whom, I am happy to hear such good accounts. I have not time to add a word more.

LETTER CXXV.

Monday evening, Dec. 29, 1777.

I PURPOSE, with your Ladyship's and Lord Ossory's good leave, to be at Ampthill on Friday, 2nd of next year. Do not stay dinner for me; I seldom get out early in the morning.

As I have seen nothing but my family these three days, I know not what has become of the world. The capture of Mud Island is very improbable, like all ship-news, especially as no account is come since.

I shall call presently on Lady Holland, and I hope to bring you a very good account of her. I have heard that she looks much better. There is to be a gallery at Bedford House for Princess Amelia on New Year's Day. I hope Lady Louisa does not return for it.

I must tell you, madam, a charming speech of my niece, Lady Maria. A few hours after the bishop died the Bishop of Oxford came to my brother where she was. Her aunt, Mrs. Clements, said to her, I am afraid you are shocked at seeing the bishop. "No" replied she. "Not as he is a bishop: if he had been only Dr. Butler, I should have been shocked." I assure you she says a thousand things as worthy of the *late* Lord Waldegrave.

LETTER CXXVI.*

Strawberry Hill, Jan. 3, 1779.

YOUR ladyship may be surprised at my dating hence, till you know my reasons. I mended so slowly

* An interval of a whole year here occurs in the correspondence. It might have been caused by the death of Lady Holland, which occurred on the 4th October, 1778, of whom the following beautiful character is written by Lord Ossory:—

"My beloved sister Mary, Lady Holland, died on the 4th Oct. 1778. I look upon that as the second great misfortune of my life (I mean in

in town that I hoped change of air would do better; but I moved with as much circumspection as if General Washington was watching me. I took the air four times in Hyde Park, before I began my march, and had this house baked for a week previously, and stayed for the frost. All these precautions have answered, negatively, that is, I have not suffered. I move but from the red to the blue room, and cannot walk even those three yards yet; but my spirits are better, which

point of date) the first being the loss of Lord Tavistock in 1767. Lady Holland (I am sure I speak without prejudice) was the most amiable person that ever lived. She possessed the most perfect sweetness of manners, joined to an excellent understanding; the most elegant person; but, alas! too delicate a frame. Her temper was the evenest I was ever acquainted with; her heart the tenderest and most sincere. She had a particular talent in disarming the ridiculous parts in the character of those she was acquainted with, but never in exposing, although she sometimes indulged in touching upon them among her friends; this she did with infinite humour and pleasantry. She had a taste for wit without possessing it in a conspicuous degree; her talent was rather what is called humour, of seeing through and well the follies of the world. She was the best wife that ever was, and in the most trying situation that can be conceived nothing could exceed her tenderness of attention to her children, and her affection to us, her unhappy brothers and sisters; her friendship to a few whose happiness it was to be her friends. To this tenderness, which prompted her to run immediately to the nursery, she owed her safety, when Wolverston House was burnt down, as appears from the following passage of a letter from Mrs. Greville to her daughter, Mrs., afterwards Lady Crewe, giving an account of the event:—'It was happy for Lady Mary that her first impulse was to run to the nursery, for had she gone her usual way, and the shortest from the room, which was the little back-staircase to the library she would have met all the flames.' She never applied sufficiently to make herself perfect either in drawing or music, but in both these arts her taste was inimitable, and her execution elegant and graceful to the last degree. Why should this bright example of every virtue have been persecuted with the most cruel illness, which brought her to the grave at the age of 32?"

always flag when the fever is quite gone; so all my vivacity when I was at the worst was a little light-headed. In truth, I was so weary of town, which is a desert, and saw so very few people for the last week, that I could not bear it. I had no books or papers, or dogs or cats to amuse me, so I was swaddled up, and here I am; if I had any thing else to say, I would have spared you this preface on myself, madam.

The year commenced, indeed, with a very significant tempest: I grieve for the cross at Ampthill, but if storms have any meaning, I believe they do not come to give hints to individuals, but to nations. That on the New Year's morning was a very general declaration, and legible from Arlington Street to this place. The road was strewed with tiles, pales, bricks, and trees. I counted seven of the latter down, two entire garden walls at Brentford, as Mr. Whitchurch's and Mr. Franks's are here. My skylight was demolished in town, and here I have lost two beautiful elms in a line with this bow-window. Lady Jersey would not grieve more if she had lost two of her pretty foreteeth. One of the stone gothic towers at Lady Pomfret's house (now single-speech Hamilton's) in my street fell through the roof, and not a thought of it remains. There were only two maids in the house, who luckily lay backwards; but the greatest ruin is at my nephew Dysart's at Ham, where five-and-thirty of the old elms are blown down. I think it no loss, as I hope now one shall see the river from the house. He never would cut a twig to see the most beautiful scene upon earth.

Don't you like the remonstrance of the twelve admirals? and did you expect a rebellion in Wales? The Ministers are not lucky in their attempts to raise a revenue; nor, indeed, in raising any thing but rebellions. I begin to think we shall revert into a heptarchy. I was diverted last week with a speech of Lord Townshend: he was coming out of Lord North's levee where he had *extorted* some favour, and met an acquaintance going in. "Well," said he, "what are you going to ask?" The person was shy: "Come, come," said the Viscount, "I am sure you want something: here, I'll lend you my pistols."

You certainly laugh at me, madam, when you propose my writing for you to Curtius. I have not his direction here, or would send it to you; but to be sure a letter for him to be left at his printer's would do.

I intend returning to the capital on Tuesday, if I am able to go abroad; or else shall stay here, where I have more comforts, and can divert myself better than waiting for accidental visits; for I make a rule never to ask any body to come to me, which is intercepting them from something they would like better; if I end in my arm-chair, it shall be a punishment to nobody else.

LETTER CXXVII.

Jan. 14, 1779.

By not hearing from me for a fortnight you may imagine, madam, that I go out, and have been diverting myself, to repair lost time. Oh! my life is very giddy and dissipated! My exquisite enjoyment has consisted in two returns of pain and lameness; my expeditions, taking the air, with the contrast of new confinement; and my *menus plaisirs*, a few sprinkled visits of charity from a few friends that remained in town. My silence therefore has proceeded from suppression of lamentations, and from having nothing to place in their stead.

By Monday I expect company and events; but as I hope you and Lord Ossory will be in the former class, I shall have no occasion to send you the latter. I have heard nothing but what cannot interest your ladyship or me, that Lady Priscilla Bertie is to marry Mr. Burrell, and that an Irish Lady Kingsborough has introduced the fashionable fashion of elopements at Dublin.

There is in sooth a charming novelty to-day of a very different kind; an answer from Mr. Gibbon to the monks that have attacked his two famous chapters. It is the quintessence of argument, wit, temper, spirit, and consequently of victory. I did not expect anything so luminous in this age of Egyptian darkness—nor the monks either. Alas! how can he have any of the leaven left?

Did you see Mr. Anstey's verses at Batheaston? They were truly more a production of this century; and not at all too good for a schoolboy. In the printed copy they have omitted an indecent stanza or two on Mrs. Macaulay. In truth Dame Thucydides has made but an uncouth match; but Anstey has tumbled from a greater height than she. Sense may be led astray by the senses; but how could a man write the Bath Guide, and then nothing but doggerel and stupidity?

Mr. Craufurd has come in as I was writing; he tells me every thing goes *swimmingly* for Admiral Keppel, which he is very glad of; but he is very sorry for Palliser. I cannot be so equitable, if it is unjust to rejoice that a scoundrel is odious; besides, it will give a hint that it is not absolutely safe to be so.

LETTER CXXVIII.

Feb. 1, 1779.

When Lord Ossory is in town, madam, I do not presume to think of writing. He is more in the world, and hears everything sooner than I do; nor would it be fair to him, to divide a moment of your time with him. However, there were such interesting topics in the letter I had the honour of receiving this evening, that I must answer it directly. But I shall waive the first subject, which concerns myself, to come to the last that touches your ladyship; and can I but

admire your goodness in thinking of me, when an angel is inoculated? You must now continue it, for you have promised I shall hear how she goes on. Sweet little love! you must be anxious, though inoculation now can scarce be called a hazard. It is as sure, as a cheat of winning, though a strange run of luck may once in two thousand times disappoint him.

The pictures at Houghton, I hear, and I fear, are sold: what can I say? I do not like even to think on it. It is the most signal mortification to my idolatry for my father's memory, that it could receive. It is stripping the temple of his glory and of his affection. A madman excited by rascals has burnt his Ephesus. I must never cast a thought towards Norfolk more; nor will hear my nephew's name, if I can avoid it. Him I can only pity; though it is strange he should recover any degree of sense, and never any of feeling! I could have saved my family, but cannot repent the motives that bound my hands. If any unhappy lunatic is ever the better for my conduct and example, it is preferable to a collection of pictures.

Yes, madam, I do think the pomp of Garrick's funeral, perfectly ridiculous.* It is confounding the immense space between pleasing talents and national

* "In Italy I became acquainted with Garrick, and from my earliest youth having admired him on the stage, was happy to be familiarly acquainted with him, cultivated his society from that time till his death, and then accompanied him to his grave as one of his pall-bearers. He and Mrs. Garrick (I think it was in 1777) have been with us in the

services. What distinctions remain for a patriot hero, when the most solemn have been showered on a player?—but when a great empire is on its decline, one symptom is, there being more eagerness on trifles than on essential objects. Shakspeare, who *wrote* when Burleigh counselled and Nottingham fought, was not rewarded and honoured like Garrick who only *acted*, when—indeed I do not know who has counselled and who has fought.

I do not at all mean to detract from Garrick's merit, who was a real genius in his way, and who, I believe, was never equalled in both tragedy and comedy. Still I cannot think that acting, however perfectly, what others have written, is one of the most astonishing talents: yet I will own as fairly that Mrs. Porter and Madlle. Dumenil have struck me so much, as even to reverence them. Garrick never affected me quite so much as those two actresses, and some few others in particular parts, as Quin, in Falstaff; King, in Lord Ogleby; Mrs. Pritchard, in Maria, in the Nonjuror; Mrs. Clive, in Mrs. Cadwallader; and Mrs. Abingdon, in Lady Teazle. They all seemed the very persons: I suppose that in Garrick I thought I saw more of his art; yet his Lear, Richard, Hotspur (which the town had not taste enough to like) Kitely, and Ranger, were as capital and perfect as action could be. In

country; Gibbon and Reynolds, at the same time, all three delightful in society. The vivacity of the great actor, the keen sarcastic wit of the great historian, and the genuine pleasantry of the great painter, mixed up well together, and made a charming party. Garrick's mimicry of the mighty Johnson was excellent."—*From Lord Ossory's Memoranda.*

declamation, I confess, he never charmed me; nor could he be a gentleman; his Lord Townley and Lord Hastings were mean, but then too the parts are indifferent, and do not call for a master's exertion.

I should shock Garrick's *devotees* if I uttered all my opinion: I will trust your ladyship with it—it is, that Le Texier is twenty times the genius. What comparison between the powers that do the fullest justice to a single part, and those that instantaneously can fill a whole piece, and transform themselves with equal perfection into men and women, and pass from laughter to tears, and make you shed the latter at both? Garrick, when he made one laugh, was not always judicious, though excellent. What idea did his Sir John Brute give of a Surly Husband. His Bayes was no less entertaining; but it was a Garretteer-bard. Old Cibber preserved the solemn coxcomb; and was the caricature of a great poet, as the part was designed to be.

Half I have said I know is heresy, but fashion had gone to excess, though very rarely with so much reason. Applause had turned his head, and yet he was never content even with that prodigality. His jealousy and envy were unbounded; he hated Mrs. Clive, till she quitted the stage, and then cried her up to the skies, to depress Mrs. Abingdon. He did not love Mrs. Pritchard, and with more reason, for there was more spirit and originality in her Beatrice than in his Benedick.

But if the town did not admire his acting more than it deserved, which indeed in general it was difficult to

do, what do you think, madam, of its prejudice, even for his writings? What stuff was his Jubilee Ode, and how paltry his Prologues and Epilogues! I have always thought that he was just the counterpart of Shakspeare; this, the first of writers, and an indifferent actor; that, the first of actors, and a woful author. Posterity would believe me, who will see only his writings; and who will see those of another modern idol, far less deservedly enshrined, Dr. Johnson. I have been saying this morning, that the latter deals so much in triple tautology, or the fault of repeating the same sense in three different phrases, that I believe it would be possible, taking the ground-work for all three, to make one of his Ramblers into three different papers, that should all have exactly the same purport and meaning, but in different phrases. It would be a good trick for somebody to produce one and read it; a second would say, "bless me, I have this very paper in my pocket, but in quite other diction; and so a third."

Our lord has been so good as to call on me again, and found me; but I take for granted will make his little Gertrude a visit to-morrow, though probably not bring your ladyship with him till she is recovered. I am in no pain, even for her beauty.

As the court-martial is likely to end this week, I suppose the parliamentary campaign will be warmly renewed the next; but what campaign will restore this country to its greatness? It is blotted out of the list of mighty empires; and they who love processions,

may make a splendid funeral for it!—but indeed it was buried last year, with Lord Chatham, at whose interment there were not half the noble coaches that attended Garrick's!

Feb. 9, 1779.

I am thoroughly concerned, madam, for yours and Lord Ossory's disappointment, and very sorry you trusted to a surgeon in the country, as they must have less experience. However, if a second trial should fail, you may be very easy, for I believe there is scarce an instance of the small-pox naturally after two inoculations. The late Lady Lothian, who was in that case, I know never had it. For your perfect tranquillity, I still wish it may appear; she will certainly have very few, with so little disposition to infection.

You are both so very partial to me, madam, that I dare not gulp your commendation of the pamphlet. I wrote it, just to say I had cleared myself, and have given very few away, and had rather it was soon forgotten, as it is likely to be, in such distracted times. I sincerely do not recollect why I did not return the first papers; I have spoken strict truth to the best of my memory, and cannot tell whether I forgot or reserved them to transcribe.

You blame my humility, and therefore I will not give the answer you expect; especially, as I have others ready. In the first place, I have not impartiality enough for such a work as Mr. Elmsley thinks me fit for. In the next, it would be an imitation, and there even my humility fails me; and the last and strongest

plea is that I am twenty years too old to write what if well written would demand twenty years to write, allowing the necessary time for collecting materials; but I have already scribbled a vast deal too much. I must publish my Fourth Volume of Painters, and then intend the world shall hear my name no more.

The weather has been disagreeably too hot, but I cannot say has affected me *en bien ou en mal.* I certainly recover more slowly than ever as is natural; and therefore conclude reasonably that one more severe fit will totally confine me. I go nowhere but into very private rooms, nor think of others; and now dispense with my saying any more of myself, madam. You forbid me humility, and yet all I say and do is founded on the consciousness of my own weakness, and on the dread of being blind to my own defects.

We are in greater confusion than all the world knows. Last night came an account of a serious insurrection at Edinburgh, where the mob has burnt two mass-houses, and threatened some lives. The state of Ireland is still more alarming: Lord Buckingham is coming away. There are rumours of changes, and certainly overtures for them. It is declared that Lord Suffolk desires to retire. We may have novelties; but whence is there any hope?

I give your ladyship my word that I know of no offers that my nieces have refused or even received. Lies are so rampant that they may have been involved in the havoc. One would think there were sad subjects enough of all sorts to glut the maw of ill-nature,

but like Craufurd it had rather dine where it is not asked than where invited. Your ladyship's words imply no malicious account in what you have been told; but falsehood is predominant, and not a hundredth part of what one hears every day is true.

I long to hear that you are at ease about Lady Gertrude; and then I will indulge the hope of seeing you. In the meantime pray permit me in my turn to tax your ladyship's humility. Pray read all Mr. Gibbon's pamphlet, and do not fear not understanding it. It is luminous as day, and clearness one of his brightest talents. I am sure the whole will delight you. It is Mr. Gibbon that *can make the driest subject interesting and entertaining*, and his reply to Davis is the strongest evidence that can be given.

LETTER CXXIX.

Bedfordshire, Feb. 17, 1779.

I ACCEPT Lady Gertrude's single pustule, madam, in full of all accounts: it is an ambassador that completely represents its principal, and is authorized to sign *peace* in its name. I could almost imagine that you had sent me the pimple itself, *for* I found a rosebud and two cowslips in your letter, which would be a prettier transformation than any in Ovid.

I am not fond of mobs, madam, though I like the occasion, and can but compare the feel I had from them, with what I should suffer were the illuminations

for the conquest of America. After putting out those lights we should have heard,—

And then put out *the* light.

Liberty has still a continent to exist in: I do not care a straw who is minister in this abandoned country. It is the *good old cause of freedom* that I have at heart; and the vexation and mortification that I have seen for these last days, tell me what we have escaped, if I did not know it before.

We had a most brilliant Westminster last night, and guns and squibs till six in the morning; but the city, I hear, was not illuminated. Lady Greenwich, looking uglier than ever with rage, said, she would go out of town, since she could not be safe in her own house. I replied, madam, I believe your ladyship must not go to Edinburgh to be quiet, for the tumults there are a little more serious than ours. In truth, I, who was born in an age of mobs, never saw any like those of this week; they were, as George Montague said of our earthquakes, *so tame you might have stroked them.* I drove through the whole city beyond the Royal Exchange on Friday night with my nieces to shew them the illuminations, and back through Holborn and St. James's Square, where was the greatest concourse, and passed as quietly as at noon day. I own I was diverted to see fear surmount pride. The Duke of Northumberland, who, on the eve of accepting his place, would have drenched the populace with beer and ale, would not put out lights till midnight, and then was forced to hang

out flambeaux; and so was Lord Weymouth, who has been in a charming panic, for he has no spirit even when he is drunk. It is pleasant to see those who condemned the towns of America to fire and sword terrified with crackers.

I found Admiral Keppel at the Duchess of Richmond's this morning: he looks ill, and quite exhausted with fatigue. He has not been at Court, or the House of Commons yet, and will go out of town as soon as he can: for my part I shall not light another candle till Lady Gertrude arrives in full beauty.

LETTER CXXX.

Bedfordshire, Feb. 23, 1779.

As you bid me write again before your arrival, and do not name the day, I hurry to obey you, madam, though I have nothing to tell you, but how happy I shall be to see you. Were I a good courtier, to be sure I should announce *the great news*, as called, of the capture of Santa Lucia. I did say, there was great want of good news when this conquest was so dignified! I think the last King of Great Britain should thence be called Lucius, as the first Christian King of it was. *My humility* does not stoop to exultation on such pigmy victories; but it does find matter of triumph on seeing that when your ladyship pretends to vanity, you are still forced to borrow your proofs from humility: for is not it being lowly in mind to be proud of agreeing

in opinion with others, and not depending on your own taste? Your ladyship's example will sooner confirm me than your arguments cure me; nay, I beg you will leave me one virtue, lest I should not be worth one. I have at the same time a supreme reverence for pride; for that honest pride that makes one respect one's self, and prevents one's wading through every kennel to keep one's place. Oh! that it should be possible to be insolent on the strength of majorities, and when the tide turns, to crouch to those one has insulted, and beseech them to accept of treachery to one's friends as an atonement! Humble or not, I would burst with pride rather than so debase myself.

The winter has, indeed, madam, been worthy of last summer. On the contrary, Sir Horace Mann tells me, they have skating on the Anio. I went to Strawberry on Saturday to enjoy the sun, and to avoid the squibs and crackers. There was a great deal of glass shed at night, and they say the illuminations are to be repeated on Thursday, when the admiral is to dine with the West India merchants.

The rejoicings have produced exceeding ill-humour, which being very productive of the same temper in its adversaries, I think the nation will awake a little from its slumbers. Whenever the thorough *reveil* does come it will be very serious!

Poor Mrs. Brand is dead of a sore throat; Lady Priscilla Bertie is married to-day, and the Queen has produced another prince.

Pray make my Io Pæans to Lady Gertrude upon

her recovery from renoculation; and tell Lady Anne that—

C cannot claim Castalia's choicest lay,
As Ann and Ampthill ask it all for A.

P. S.—Mr. Beauclerc has just called, and told me a shocking history. Sir Hugh Palliser has a sister at York, whom he supported. As if the poor woman was not wretched enough with his disgrace and ruin, or accessory to his guilt, the mob there has demolished her house, and she is gone mad. What a bill would the authors of the American war have to pay, if they were charged as they deserve with all the calamities it has given date to! however, I do believe they are as sorry as if they were penitent!

LETTER CXXXI.

Bedfordshire, April 8, 1779.

I DID not answer your ladyship's letter, as I generally do, the moment I received it, because I had nothing to tell you but about the remnant of myself, which is the worst subject in the world. I have been six days at Strawberry Hill, and I think the soft south west did me good; but I have a constant feverish heat that seems to be undermining my ruins; however its progress is very slow; and so if you please we will say no more of it; but your goodness in inquiring is written on my heart's last tablet. Mr. Mason was with me for two days: he is printing the third book of his Garden.

Lord Harrington is gathered to his fathers, or rather, is taken from his *mothers*. Lord Beachamp's son is well again. Lord Harrington has left my Lady 2500*l.* besides her jointure of 1500*l.* a year; to Lady Anna Maria 6000*l.*; 5000*l.* to Mr. Stanhope, and an estate of 150*l.* a year; but there are so many debts that the legacies are more magnificent than generous. The charming house at St. James's is to be sold; but it is supposed the present earl will purchase it.

This is all I have heard, madam, since I came to town yesterday, which is perfectly empty; the grass grows in the streets, though nowhere else, for the climate is turned as Asiatic as the government; and it is to be hoped that in time there will be elephants and tigers of our own growth in the Sultan's gardens, to the great satisfaction of Sir William Chambers. I was pleased yesterday to see that, though every thing old-fashioned is going out of date, we have still resources. If our trade decays we have new handycrafts: at Turnham Green I read on a large board—*manufacture of temples*. I suppose the Archbishop of York will set up looms in his diocese for Popish chapels, and Manchester weave dungeons for the Inquisition. The pope's bull against the dissenters' bill is actually issued from the Clarendon printing-house. I was interrupted by the strangest story I ever heard, and which I cannot yet believe, though it is certainly true. Last night as Miss Wray was getting into her coach in Covent Garden from the play, a clergyman shot her through the head, and then himself. She is dead; but he is alive

to be hanged—in the room of Sir Hugh Palliser. Now, madam, can one believe such a tale? How could poor Miss Wray have offended a divine? She was no enemy to the church militant or naval, to the Church of England or the church of Paphos. I do not doubt but it will be found that the assassin was a dissenter, and instigated by the Americans to give such a blow to the state. My servants have heard that the murderer was the victim's husband: methinks his jealousy was very long suffering! "*Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ!*" and that he should not have compounded for a deanery! What trials Lord Sandwich goes through! he had better have one for all.

Friday 9th.

I gave David this letter yesterday, and had forgotten to seal it, which he did not perceive till I was gone out for the evening. Instead of sealing it he kept it for me till this morning after I had written my second. I send both to shew I had been punctual, though all the novelty is evaporated, and my intelligence is not worth a farthing more than the newspaper.

April 9, 1779.

Ladies, said a certain philosopher, always tell their minds in the postscript. As that is the habitation of truth, I send you, madam, a little more truth than there was in my narrative of yesterday, which was warm from the first breath of rumour: yet though this is only a postscript I will not answer for its perfect veracity. It is the most authentic account I have yet

been able to collect of so strange a story, of which no doubt you are curious to know more.

The assassin's name is Hackman; he is brother to a reputable tradesman in Cheapside, and is of a very pleasing figure himself, and most engaging behaviour. About five years ago he was an officer in the 66th regiment, and being quartered at Huntingdon, pleased so much as to be invited to the oratorios at Hinchinbrook, and was much caressed there. Struck with Miss Wray's charms he proposed marriage; but she told him she did not choose to carry a knapsack. He went to Ireland, and there changed the colour of his cloth, and at his return, I think not long ago, renewed his suit, hoping a cassock would be more tempting than a gorget; but in vain. Miss Wray, it seems, has been out of order, and abroad but twice all the winter. She went to the play on Wednesday night for the second time with Galli the singer. During the play the desperate lover was at the Bedford Coffee House, and behaved with great calmness, and drank a glass of capillaire. Towards the conclusion, he sallied into the piazza, waiting till he saw his victim handed by Mr. Macnamara. He came behind her, pulled her by the gown, and on her turning round, clapped the pistol to her forehead, and shot her through the head. With another pistol he then attempted to shoot himself, but the ball only grazing his brow, he tried to dash out his own brains with the pistol, and is more wounded by those blows than by the ball.

Lord Sandwich was at home expecting her to supper

at half-an-hour after ten. On her not returning an hour later, he said something must have happened: however, being tired he went to bed at half-an-hour after eleven, and was scarce in bed before one of his servants came in, and said Miss Wray was shot. He stared, and could not comprehend what the fellow meant; nay, lay still, which is full as odd a part of the story as any. At twelve came a letter from the surgeon to confirm the account; and then he was extremely afflicted.

Now, upon the whole, madam, is not the story full as strange as ever it was? Miss Wray has six children, the eldest son is fifteen, and she was at least three times as much. To bear a hopeless passion, for five years, and then murder one's mistress—I don't understand it! If the story clears up at all, your ladyship shall have a sequel. These circumstances I received from Lord Hertford, who heard them at court yesterday from the Lords of the Admiralty. I forgot that the Galli swooned away on the spot.

I do not love tragic events *en pure perte*. If they do happen, I would have them historic. This is only of kin to history, and tends to nothing. It is very impertinent in one Hackman, to rival Herod, and shoot Marianne—and *that* Marianne, a kept mistress! and yet it just sets curiosity agog, because she belongs to Lord Sandwich, at a critical moment—and yet he might as well have killed any other inhabitant of Covent Garden.

LETTER CXXXII.

Strawberry Hill, June 22, 1779.

YOUR ladyship's reproaches would be very just, if my pleas of excuse were not too valid. I have been in town but one half day since I had the honour of seeing you; and my own pastime is too insipid to send you. I have a more weighty apology too to urge, which increases every day, and which I will give you in the moving words of one, almost my co-temporary, Dan Lydgate, who in his last piece complains of his trembling joints, and declares that age having benumbed his faculties, had deprived him of *all the subtyltė of curious makyng in Englysshe to endyte.*

You will think me torpid indeed, madam, when I tell you that I have not set my foot in London even since the delivery of the Spanish Ambassador's sour rescript.

In truth I conclude the eruption of a third war would call Lord Ossory to town; and then I knew your ladyship would have more authentic intelligence than I could send you by rebound.

The ruin of my country is certainly no matter of joy to me. Perhaps I have long thought it undone; and then one may be allowed to prefer one mode to another. A nation cannot perish entirely. Foreign enemies seldom destroy a country, and then only by total conquest. In my opinion the subversion of a happy constitution, which is only effected by domestic

enemies, is a worse evil, certainly a more permanent and more mortifying one, than defeats by strangers. If calamities restore the spirit of our constitution, which had exalted us from a little trading island to the rank of a great empire, we may be a mighty people once more; for it is liberty alone, not titular authority and prerogative, that can aggrandise small countries. If we will be emperors, it will be without empire. The majesty of the people of England was no joke — for they maintained their dignity; but a grand signor of this diminutive islet, without its trade, which is never an appendage of despotism, would be crushed amidst the real potentates that now exist in Europe; and two of their majesties seem to think the hour is come for sweeping us from the roll of monarchs.

These are not professions, but have always been my opinions, madam. I think the national character lost, or we should not be where we are at this moment, trusting to precedents of former miracles for preservation; but miracles are not such matters of chance, as to contradict calculation. Only Turks believe that fools are inspired. If Providence interposes its Omnipotence in politics, at least it selects wise men for its agents; or if not wise men, a genius. I sit here, waiting till the star appears that is to conduct those sages. I know not from what quarter, East, West, or South, they are to come. I am sure they have not set out from the North. My utmost wish, not my expectance, is to live to see my country escape tolerably from this menacing darkness. I am too inconsiderable to give

advice, and too old to contribute anything else; and therefore sit silently here awaiting the working of the tempest: shipwreck or miracles are soon learnt anywhere.

I have wandered beyond my intention, but you set my pen a prating, though I have told it I will have it hold its tongue. My private story is very brief. My health is much better for quiet and total idleness, and my fevers gone. Lady Ailesbury, and Lady William Campbell past one night here, and last week the Duke of Richmond and the Duchess of Leinster, dined with me. On Friday I dined at Princess Amelie's, and was so unfortunate, to my confusion, as to arrive after she was set down to table, but as her royal highness had a great cold, I took occasion to go and inquire after her the next day and made my submission. There were the Duchess of Bedford, their Ladyships Ailesbury, Holdernesse, Mary Coke, Margaret Compton, Anne Howard, Betty Delme, Mrs. Howe, Lords Hertford, and Dillon, Lords Pelham and Edgcumbe, and their wives, and Mr. Morrice, who looked dreadfully ill indeed.

I hear Lord Carlisle has resigned, and conjecture why; and that Lord Shelburne is going to be married —perhaps your ladyship knows to whom: unless you tell me to the contrary, I shall be very glad.

Shall I make you smile, madam, in this ugly hour? You know my Swiss David's solemnity and uncouth pronunciation, which he thinks perfect. He came into my room t'other day very composedly and dangling his arms said, "Auh! dar is Meses Ellis want some of

your large flags to put in her great O."—I cried, what! though I could scarce question him for laughing. At last with much ado, I discovered that Mrs. Ellis's wants lay in her grotto.

That beautiful spot, Mr. Hindley's, is to be sold by auction, next Monday. I hear Mrs. Coke, the mother of him of Norfolk, intends to be the purchaser—and I hope so: for I do not know her, which is a good circumstance in a next neighbourhood; and a dowager is a quiet sort of neighbour, and don't keep hounds. I pray for the peace of my little Jerusalem, since I have long been cured of having any other object.

Wednesday noon.

I had sealed my letter for the post, when I received your ladyship's second, for which I give you a million of thanks. I am delighted with the confirmation of Lady Louisa's match. My acquaintance with Lord Shelburne is very slight; but two essential points are gospel, that he is a man of sense, and that he made an excellent husband to a wife far inferior to Lady Louisa in beauty. There is a third, which though negative, I reckon a capital merit at present, he is not a gamester.

George Selwyn is suddenly returned, and as Lord Ossory is in town too, I think I shall go to town to-morrow.

LETTER CXXXIII.

Bedfordshire, July 6, 1779.

I SHOULD not have waited to owe you a letter, madam, had I not had a substantial reason for silence. I had the gout in my foot for two days at the beginning of last week: it went off at once, but at night came into my left eye; and remained there four or five days. To what part Old Truepenny, like the ghost in Hamlet, will shift its quarters next, I cannot tell; but I see it will never quit me till it makes a ghost of Horatio. In the mean time it lays such an embargo on me that I never dare engage myself, or promise anything that I am to perform personally, lest I seem capricious; but I am so much worse company than usual, when I am not well, and struggle to hide it, that I determine never to bind myself for a minute but conditionally.

I have done talking politics, madam, as I should if I lived at the foot of Vesuvius and the mountain grumbled. If the lava takes a contrary direction, and my cottage escapes, I will look about me and see what is left. How can you mind what passes in parliament? The vestry at Ampthill is of as much consequence. Nothing happens there but contradictions. I observe the speech gives the lie to all the late assertions of hopes in America, of which it speaks dolefully. I do not think your neighbour so much in the wrong in apprehending a rebellion if Lord North was turned out. The nation would be consequent in

resenting it; in short I believe I am really Xottoho, a Chinese that comprehends nothing he sees or hears.

Pray let me know when you come to your wedding, that I may get a peep of you. Of weddings in my own tribe I am as tired as of politics and have put cotton into all my ears. Be the events of Empress Chance obeyed; nobody but her majesty has any decision. I leave everything to her, have abandoned all my principles, and am governed by nothing but *De par la Reine.*

George I have seen. He embarked in an instant on receiving a warrant to carry off his prize, as if she had been the heiress of the Indies and he had feared a retractation. I did not ask to see her. Would you ask to see the Moon, if Endymion told you he had married her?

Lord Bolingbroke, I hear, will live. At first they thought he had taken laudanum. It would have been a monstrous injustice in opium to kill him, when it will not despatch Beauclerc.

In my neighbourhood there is no talk of the fleets. All we think of is the new tax on post-horses, which they say will produce more disturbances than the ballot for the militia would have done, and a million of broken heads.

I suppose that was the object (as it seems to be of all our measures) and that as the demand for plaisters will be infinitely increased, it may furnish pretext for a heavy gabel on diaculum. Adieu! madam, if we are digged out alive, when the conflagration is over,

we will chat over old times. I do not desire to embark like Pliny, and probe the nature of earthquakes.

P. S.—Harold, my venerable cat that was found on the Goodwin Sands, fifteen years ago or more, died last night in a good old age. I am not grieved, for I have not strength to have carried him out of Troy like Anchises on my shoulders.

LETTER CXXXIV.

Arlington Street, July 14, 1779.

To shew your ladyship that I do not always wait for provocatives, I begin a letter to-night, without well knowing what it is to contain. I came to town this morning about my house in Berkeley Square, of which at last I begin to have hopes, though I am in Chancery for it; but it is by a mode of my own. I have persisted in complimenting and flattering my parties, till by dint of complaisance and respect I have brought them to pique themselves on equal attentions; so that instead of a law-suit it has more the air of a treaty between two little German princes who are mimicking their betters only to display their titular dignities. His Serene Highness, Colonel Bisshopp is the most obsequious and devoted servant of my serenity the Landgrave of Strawberry.

His Royal Highness of Sion, who is Lord Paramount of Strawberry, has acquainted the College of Electors of Westminster that they are to be invaded by the

French forthwith, and has subscribed 2000*l.* for the defence of his Palatinate. Governor Johnstone is said to be gone to destroy the embarkation: I hope he will do it as completely as he has demolished his own character. The town does not seem to be much alarmed, and the courageous stocks don't value it a fraction; so it does not become us poor little princes to be more frightened than our superiors.

I met Miss Wrottesley this evening at my niece Cholmondeley's, and she told me Mr. Dunning has found a flaw in the settlements, and that they must be drawn again.

Are not you sorry, madam, for the poor Duke of Ancaster, especially since he made so noble and sensible a will? I think his attention to his mother must half kill her. I hear he has left a legacy to a very small man that was always his companion, and whom, when he was drunk, he used to fling at the heads of the company, as others fling a bottle. Lord Bolingbroke, I suppose you know, is not dead.

Lady Jane Scott, to whom I made your ladyship's compliments, has found in a cabinet at Ham a most enchanting picture in enamel by Zincke, of the Duchess of Queensberry, which the Duke always carried in his pocket. It is as simple as my Cowley, in white with the hair all flowing, and beautiful as the Hours in Guido's Aurora, and very like her to the last moment.

I dined on Saturday with my cousin, T. Walpole, at Carshalton, where, though so near London, I never was in my life. It is as rural a village as if in North-

umberland, much watered with the clearest streams and buried in ancient trees of Seawen's Park, and the neighbouring Beddington.

I had long wished to see the latter, the seat of one of my ancestors, Sir Nicholas Carew, whose head, as he was Master of the Horse and Knight of the Garter, flew off in one of the moods of Henry VIII. Madam Bess, I think, often visited his son there. It is an ugly place, with no prospect, a large very bad house, but it was burnt, rebuilt wretchedly after the Restoration, and never finished. Nothing remains of the ancient fabric, but a brave old hall, with a pendent roof, copied by Wolsey at Hampton Court, a vast shield of arms and quarterings over the chimney, and two clumsy brazen andirons, which they told us had served Queen Elizabeth in the Tower, but look more as if they had served her for cannon to defend it. There is an almost effaced picture of Sir Nicholas, that seems to have been painted by Holbein, and for which, perished as it is, I longed.

I shall terminate this letter of scraps and nothings with a good epigram, which Mr. Jerningham gave me t'other day :—

Ce Marmontel si lent, si long, si lourd,
Qui ne parle pas, mais qui beugle,
Juge la peinture en aveugle,
Et la musique comme un sourd.
Ce pedant a si sotte mine,
Et de ridicules bardé,
Dit qu'il a le secret des beaux vers de Racine—
Jamais secret ne fut si bien gardé.

The first line put me in mind of an excellent satiric

epitaph on the General Lord Cadogan, of which I have forgotten all but the last couplet,—

> Ungrateful to th' ungrateful man he grew by,
> A bad, bold, blustering, bloody, blundering booby.

They were Bishop Atterbury's, who was glad to kill the Duke of Marlborough with the same stone.

LETTER CXXXV.

Strawberry Hill, July 20, 1779.

It would have been impossible for me, madam, to have met your ladyship in town yesterday, had it been proper; but when you were there but for one day, and that a nuptial one, I should have been unreasonable to expect you to bestow a twinkling on me. In fact, I was detained here; poor Lady Ailesbury was come to me all terror and distress.

Her daughter was really taken prisoner, and she had been told her husband and his island were captive too. The Duchess of Leinster, Lady William Campbell, and Mrs. Damer were actually taken by a privateer, the captain of which was no doubt a Paladin in disguise; he not only treated them with the continence of Scipio, but with disinterest, a virtue still more rare in a freebooter. He would not touch a pin; and they were told they were mistresses to go whither they pleased. Mr. Conway has been as little molested. *Acharnement* is left only to us. A courtier said yesterday, "We must act offensively;" I replied, "I thought we had done that

sufficiently already, for we had offended all the world." There were letters in the City on Saturday that say Gibraltar is besieged. I have heard no more of it since; but it is very probable.

It is true that my niece Horatia has put on mourning for the Duke of Ancaster: it is on precedents, and with the approbation of the Duchess Dowager, who has written to her in the kindest manner, acknowledging the intended marriage; lamenting not having her for a daughter, and offering to come to her as soon as she is able. Lady E. Burrel has written in the same style; and the new duke and duchess have sent compliments of condolence. Lady Horatia has behaved in the most reasonable manner, shewn very proper concern, but nothing romantic or extravagant.

Your ladyship exacts a *petit mot* on Canopus, but I have not a word to say. I have lived till all the maxims and axioms that I learnt in my youth are grown as superannuated as I am. The sages I was taught to worship have been exploded, and the experience of past ages contradicted. Ministers become more popular in proportion to their miscarriages; debts, taxes, losses, strengthen government. Saws and proverbs, formerly esteemed the quintessence of wisdom, are inverted; for instance, rats of old abandoned a sinking ship,—now they run into it. As we have chopped our old system to pieces and thrown it into the kettle to give it new life, be sure it will come out with fresh vigour and bloom, however, obstinate *I wait for the echo*. Let us see what is left, when we come to sue

for, and do obtain peace. A map then, and a pen and ink, will decide who have been in the right.

I hope, and do not doubt, madam, but your new countess will be very happy. Lord Shelburne made an admirable husband to a wife, much less handsome, and apparently, for I did not know her, less agreeable. He I am sure will be out of luck if he is unfortunate, for I must do the Duchess of Bedford the justice to say, that a Spartan dame never launched more excellent wives than she has done.

This was only meant as an answer, and I will not swell it into more. I see one is to be kept upon the *qui vive* all the summer with reports and alarms true or false; but I have prepared myself by disbelieving every one till it has been contradicted backwards and forwards two or three times.

We have not arrived at a word of truth these four years, till by a new lie becoming necessary its predecessor is forgotten and suffered to appear stark naked.

LETTER CXXXVI.

Strawberry Hill, July 24, 1779.

You will be tired of seeing my hand, madam, yet it would be indecent neither to accept your kind invitation nor tell you why I do not. Yesterday I received notice from my attorney that the master of the rolls has, with epigrammatic despatch, heard my cause, and pronounced a decree in my favour. Surely the whip

of the new driver, Lord Thurlow, has pervaded all the broad wheels of the law, and set them galloping. I must go to town on Monday, and get my money ready for payment,—not from impatience to enter on my premises, but though the French declare they are coming to burn London, bank-bills are still more combustible than houses, and should my banker's shop be reduced to ashes, I might have a mansion to pay for, and nothing to pay with. If both were consumed, at least I should not be in debt.

I will own fairly, too, that the moment is so huge, I do not care to stir. It is pretty certain that France, vociferous as her threats, and ready as her preparations, will await the decision of the empire of the sea. We have, I doubt, one prong less to our trident than she and Spain; yet I think the grapple will be tough. Were I Neptune or Æolus, or—I forget who was the classic God of sea-fights, or whether they ever deified any Twitcher after his reception into Olympus,—I should perhaps make a pretty impartial division of the damage, and lay it so heavy on both sides, that, Madam the House of Bourbon should be glad to leave off playing with fire, and, Madam Great Britain should learn to treat mediators with more civility. Every man John of the latter lady's boys are confident of success, and when other arguments fail, cry, Providence has always saved us; which argument, I suppose, is built on this simple hypothesis, that God made Great Britain, and the devil all the rest of the world. To be sure I heartily pray for victory; but I would not have it quite so

sound as to turn our heads and encourage us to pawn our last fig-leaf. Obstinacy has brought us to the precipice; and after squandering America, we stake ourselves rather than own we have lost it; but I forget,—what is all this to my going next week or not to Ampthill? Why, this all, our all, is the reason I do not go. Public, private considerations fetter me. I am no hero, nor any of the fine things your ladyship says of me, and yet I must stay and comfort those that are weaker than myself. Lady Ailesbury is impressed with a thousand terrors, and not without cause. I tremble myself lest Mr. Conway should have an opportunity of being romantic and defending a pebble, because he has nothing else to defend; but *dabit Deus his quoque finem.* I have lived to see the rebels at Derby; and I am mighty apt to think that every thing will end as I wish. I know no reason why I should be favoured with fortune's smiles; but she takes fancies; and in gratitude and deference I have thrown myself entirely upon her. But two days ago, she delivered me from a deluge. There was a torrent of rain; all the pipes were stopped, and the inundation burst into six places of my house. The gallery was overflowed, pictures and damask soaked, the star-chamber drowned, and the stair-case was a cataract. I sent up all the servants, and in a quarter of an hour the waters ceased, and I dreamt that a rainbow rested on the battlements, and assured my castle should never be drowned again. Pray, madam, learn my visions; they are very comfortable, and founded on gratitude, not presumption.

I have heard much of Mr. B's being a second Cosmo Gordon and a third Parson Bate. It is a worthy occupation for a man and a gentleman! but too contemptible to dwell on.

A card shall be left for Mr. Berrisford, in Grosvenor Place, on Monday. My gout entered like love, but I assure you did not retreat like love, or, at sixty-two I doubt the fit would have been longer.

LETTER CXXXVII.

August 7, 1779.

I HAVE had a double excuse for not having written to your ladyship for above a week; a return of the gout in my eye, and the completion of the purchase of my house, for which I have been no fewer than three times in town since last Sunday. Fortune has again smiled on me: I think myself most lucky to have paid my money; the house might be burnt, I obliged to buy it, and have nothing to pay for it—at least I shall not be in debt for the ashes. Well? Fortune has smiled on more than an individual, by conducting home our West Indian fleet. Huffed, rebuffed, and driven off as she has been, she is likely to be our best ally. The rest, as ill-treated, are not so forgiving. Whether the French will come, is another matter: they certainly meditate it, and great destruction; they give out, to burn London. Lord North said publicly, at a large dinner at Lord Hertford's on Tuesday last, that

he expected them in a week. Not having the Duchess of Bedford's shrewdness, I cannot discover cleverness in such a notification, unless he had bragged, too, that he had invited them. Still my mind does not *misgive* me, which is a comfortable resource, when one has not much grounds in reason. I take what precautions I can in my own affairs, and then resign myself to good fortune.

Your ladyship will see Lord Grantham, and probably Lord Macartney. Our friends are returned on our hands from all quarters: would to God I were as sure of seeing Mr. Conway in safety! I do not desire to have him achieve an Iliad in a nutshell. This I dare say to you, madam, though not to him. Do not wonder, then, that forty or twenty miles nearer to news are important to me. If Sir Charles Hardy's navy does not beat one a third more numerous, and with little loss too, Jersey will be swallowed on the road to England. All that will remain to the few will be to cry, you cannot say we did it, though they do say so. This may sound small consolation,; but weigh it against what we should feel if we had an empire lost, and all the lives and all the disgraces on our consciences, and then, madam, is inculpability no *douceur?* Well! we must shut our eyes on all this at present, and defend our last stake, and not scold like the perverse Jews when the Temple totters. I could be amazed at many things, if I had leisure—as why, after stooping to beg pardon of the Congress, we rejected the mediation of Spain; why, after besecching France not to

dabble in America, we do not treat now, and save what we can, as any peace signed to-day would be preferable to what we shall possibly sign two months hence. But we have stridden from blunder to blunder, and, as at chess, when the game is deplorable, the king and the castle change places; the one is reduced to a corner, and the other, who is called rook, too, may not bring him back without being checkmated.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 5, 1779.

Your ladyship and I seem to think alike, that when things are very bad, *il n'y a rien à dire.* For my part I have put most of my senses and intellects under an interdict. There is little use of them, when one can neither believe one's ears or eyes, nor can comprehend what is doing or not doing, nor can judge on any thing like nineteen in twenty of those one meets. Now and then, indeed, I do meet with a person or two who is so candid as to say, "Well, I own I was mistaken." So civil a concession stops one's mouth, and prevents one's saying, "You lie; I know why you chose to mistake." Yes, madam, I have been silent, for I did not know what to say, nor am a jot wiser now. Our fleet is at Portsmouth, nor do I form an opinion: I have seen how foul it is to pronounce on manœuvres at sea. Who this time twelve month conceived the merits of Admiral Keppel?

I scarce guess where you are, and direct this at random, to Ampthill. I have passed a miserable summer, and, like a joist of an old mansion, am mouldering with it. The gout has passed great part of its *villeggiatura* in my left eye, and now seems settled for autumn in my hip, but incog. under the name of rheumatism. I should be ashamed of complaining with such an exemplar of fortitude hard by, as my poor old friend Lady Blandford. It will be three weeks on Tuesday since she was seized with a disorder in her bowels. At once, according to all her doctrine and all her practice, she determined to die, and would take nothing to assist nature, but told me when I expostulated with her, that the machine was worn out, and that life was of no value when uncomfortable. She has persisted perfectly cool and in her senses, begging for laudanum, suffering dreadfully, and the more, as you may imagine, from our late more than West Indian heats. She was alive this morning, for nature was determined to prove that she might have lived if she had pleased, though eighty-four. Consider, too, madam, that it is not the fashion to wish to die, as it was with the Romans. Miss Stapylton, who is also a Virtue personified, has tended her from the moment she heard of her illness, and has literally scarce been in bed since. Miss Stapylton has 30,000*l.*, and Lady Blandford nothing. I wish we had some of these exalted characters in breeches! These two women shine like the last sparkles in a piece of burnt paper, which the children call the parson and clerk. Alas!

the rest of our old ladies are otherwise employed; they are at the head of fleets and armies. Pray tell me something of yourself and concerns, madam.

LETTER CXXXIX.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 11, 1779.

THE British flag is indeed strangely lowered, madam. I used to say the English flag; but since disgrace is our lot, I am very willing that the Scotch, who have occasioned, should partake of it. The accounts from the West Indies are much more creditable, and the loss of the enemy much the more considerable—at least the Gazette is to say so to night. For my own part I am not at all sorry of Sir Charles Hardy's inaction, not loving a *va-tout.*

You may imagine how much my feelings sympathize with your ladyship's. Jersey rankles the most of all.

This is all I can write at present, having no use but of my right arm. The other is all gout, but I flatter myself it will not be a long fit, though my nights have been very painful. Your kind invitation to Ampthill, madam, adds to my woes. I do not think I shall ever be able to go any whither on pleasure more. I never now have a week of perfect health together, nor have strength to recover in the intervals. There is nothing shocking in decay, when one has outlived the glory and prosperity of one's country.

LETTER CXL.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 24, at night.

I CAN learn no more of Lord Macartney, madam, than your ladyship sees in the papers, that he is near Rochelle. I have written to Madame du Deffand to beg she will do him any service in her power, though he must have more powerful mediators; but sometimes by accident a straw may be more useful than a white wand.

There was a Gazette this morning that will frighten the combined fleets out of their senses. We have destroyed a whole navy of walnut-shells at a place as well known as Pharsalia, called Penobscot. If Great Britain was taken, and we reconquered an ait in the Thames, I believe the Gazette would think the latter only worth mentioning; but all we do and do not, is too silly and contemptible to dwell on!

Poor Lady Lincoln has a new misfortune, and has lost her son. Lord Thomas, the successor, is in America, and has more chances than one against returning.

I was in town yesterday for the first time of my going out these weeks, as my left hand is still muffled. I went to give some orders about my new house, with which I am much pleased, now it is painted and papered, though in the plainest manner possible. You are so good, madam, as to mention the air of Southampton to me. I believe the sea air would do me

good if anything would; but at present I am too low and too weak to determine on anything, or to bear anything but perfect quiet. You would not know me, for instead of being perpetually occupied about some trifle or other, I lie and doze half the day on the couch, and at night count the day gone with satisfaction.

It is very foolish or very vain, probably both, to fill half a letter with one's self at such a moment; but is the public a better theme? Where can one descry a prospect that promises a gleam of hope? Flying from D'Orvilliers, beaten by D'Estaing, and comforted by gathering a wreath of sea-weeds at Penobscot! How low is a nation sunk, when its understanding may be so insulted! Whenever the King of Prussia was beaten, he said he was beaten; he never sang *Te Deum* for putting to flight a handful of hussars.

Adieu! madam, I am sick of the times, and sick of myself, and so I doubt are you too.

LETTER CXLI.

Berkeley Square, my inauguration day, Oct. 14, 1779.

I CAME to town this morning to take possession of Berkeley Square, and am as pleased with my new habitation as I can be with anything at present. Lady Shelburne's being queen of the palace over against me, has improved the view since I bought the house, and I trust will make your ladyship not so shy as you were of Arlington Street.

I stopped at the turnpike, and sent to Grosvenor Place, but no tidings of you; however, as I shall stay in town till Saturday, I do not despair, having left a note for you. On Saturday I must return as my royalties leave the Pavilions on Sunday, and go to Blackheath.

The catastrophe of the poor old lady that you killed with kindness, has touched me exceedingly, not on her account, for having been cotemporary of Lady Gouran, I conclude she was ancient; and then is not it charming to be smothered with joy? but I feel tenderly for your ladyship, who must have suffered for your most innocent good nature.

I know nothing of the authenticity of Lord Macartney's and D'Estaing's letters, but believe they are thought genuine. Madame du Deffand in a letter I received yesterday, tells me they are very angry with the former for his great indiscretions on shipboard. He is at Limoges, where the Comte de Broglie has seen and commends him. I have written again to night to my friend in his favour, and have told her that Lord Macartney has always been *deservedly* a great favourite of the ladies, and that as women govern in France, she must interest them in his behalf. I hope Lady Macartney will forgive me if he earns his release.

It is firmly believed that D'Estaing is gone with fourteen ships of the line to New York, where Arbuthnot has but seven. This will exceedingly shorten the American war. The combined fleets, now said to amount to seventy, are expected forth again.

France, I am persuaded, is impatient to shorten the whole war. I have heard to-night at an Irish house, whereon I do not entirely pin my faith, that Lord North says he fears the Irish more than the English parliament. At the same place I was told that an American negotiator is here offering treaty, on condition of total silence on the word *independence*, and that his offer had been rejected. By an odd collision of circumstances, I did discover one truth, whatever the rest were. The Bishop of Derry had said there that he had proposed to the administration to take off the test in favour of the Catholics. I do know that he has said that it was to be taken off; which I do not believe.

Now I am sending coals to Ireland, I must add an excellent story I was told at the same place. That Lilliputian, Lady Newhaven, arriving at Tunbridge, desired Mrs. Vesey to explain to her and instruct her in the customs and news of the place. A man arrived ringing a bell—for what? said my lady; "Oh!" replied Mrs. Vesey, "to notify your arrival." At that instant the man bawled out, "At one o'clock, at Mr. Pinchbeck's great room, will be shewn the surprising tall woman."

I hope these Hibernian tales will satisfy your ladyship in the room of the Middlesex election, of which I know no more than the man in the moon.

The invitation to Farming-Woods will not want the codicil of Fotheringay, which I have seen, and Kirby, —I forget whose—if ever I recover my youth and

spirits, or, at least, the latter, which is not very probable, while I remember the happy days of my spring, and the glorious days of my autumn! When the chill of winter is sharpened by the blasts of national disgrace, the only comfort of age is, that there are no more seasons to follow.

I know I do not wish for one more summer, if I am to pass it like the last! Nor can I see on what to build for expecting that the next will be more comfortable.

LETTER CXLII.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 27, 1779.

I AM fortunate, madam, that you have had a parenthesis of Bedfordshire neighbours between *fixed air*, *electricity*, *solar microscopes*, and every topic in and out of creation; and my barren narrow conversation, which is confined to few ideas and less knowledge than any man's who has lived so long, had opportunities of seeing so much, and yet has stored but up a heap of indigested trifles and fathomed no earthly thing to the bottom, nor any heavenly one to the top—which, in truth, I believe, can be done a very little way: however, I honour natural philosophers in every one of their walks. They aim at enlightening mankind; most other professions at deceiving.

I have always heard that Bowood was magnificent: you will not wonder that accounts of noble palaces raise a sigh in my breast, not of envy, but remem-

brance!—but, alas! what will all our seats be but monuments of past splendour? As I should not like to die in an unfinished moment, though perhaps preferable to the catastrophe, I wish for peace, to know what is to be left. I doubt many turbulent scenes are to pass first; and, though one expected them much sooner, it is plain that causes have at last their effects; and, though one is often disappointed in the calculations of wisdom, folly and presumption produce their natural consequences. These multiply daily; and, being so numerous and so repugnant to each other, the medicines that would, as in bodily distempers, cure some, are prejudicial to others. For instance, can your Ireland be redressed, without danger of producing insurrections here? Can the two islands jar, and not facilitate the views of France and Spain? I have reason to believe that the combined fleets will again appear before the conclusion of the campaign, though the Government thinks not. They still talk at Paris of invasion; and, having threatened it so often vainly, may have rendered it more facile by our incredulity. But what signify conjectures? As Cato says, Plato cannot end them and the sword must.

My constitution, which set out under happy stars, seems to keep pace with the change of constellations, and fail like the various members of the empire. I am now confined with the rheumatism in my left arm, and find no benefit from our woollen manufacture, which I flattered myself would always be a resource. On

Monday I shall remove to Shelburne Square, and watch impatiently the opening of the countess's windows; though, with all her and her earl's goodness to me, I doubt I shall profit little of either. I do not love to be laughed at or pitied; and dread exposing myself to numbers of strange servants and young people, who wonder what Methusalem does out of his coffin. Lady Blandford is gone; her antediluvian dowagers dispersed; amongst whom I was still reckoned a lively young creature. Wisdom I left forty years ago to Welbore Ellis, and must not pretend to rival him now when he is grown so rich by the semblance of it. Since I cannot then act old age with dignity, I must keep myself out of the way; and weep for England in a corner.

I am glad the appearances in Miss Fox are better. The elder Lady Albemarle has had a stroke of palsy, but is better. Lady Sarah came to town with her, and still looks prettier and fresher than an angel of Correggio.

Whither are your next motions, Madam? You lately talked of not seeing London until the roses appear. That is a little perverse, and very uncomfortable to me, since, seldom dining abroad, I should be happy to sit by your fire in the long evenings; but you scarce arrive till the *tourbillon* of Ranelagh surrounds you. Well! I must have done with wishes, which are foolish but in youth, when *time may* accomplish them.

LETTER CXLIII.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 1.
Too late for the post.

You bid me send you all the news. Pray, of what sort would you have, madam?—or do you act the innocent, and ask, though you know more than I do? Most likely, for I know no more than the herb-women in St. James's market. But I have no objection to being a dupe, if you have a mind I should be one. It is but one step below ignorance: so then, you do not know that the lord president of the council, such an age ago as last Wednesday, would not attend to swear in Lord Stormont, but walked in the Park during the solemnity, to the great scandal of all true Catholics.

In the next place your ladyship, poor soul, does not know that the paymaster of the army holds all you poor souls very cheap who do not know that Lord Gower is *out*—why, has he resigned? has he resigned? —no, not yet, the king has not been in town.

I can gratify your ladyship's curiosity or finesse no farther, for I truly know no more. Nay, I hold this state machinery or mystery in the same light as the Middlesex election. Objects that are gigantic on some horizons, are straws on others. When every part of the fabric totters, who can care whether a board starts in the floor of the drawing-room or closet, except some *joiner* who hopes his bill will be paid before the palace tumbles. Contrary to Lord Shelburne's opinion, there

are reasons to think that the combined fleets will, if not yet sailed, still leave Brest, to the amount of fifty-two sail. Sir Charles Hardy has forty-three; but, come the blow this year or not, what is to amend our situation? Will more losses in other parts?—Will greater difficulties and dissatisfactions at home? Will Ireland discourage France? Will new taxes encourage England? Will perseverance in measures that open new calamities everywhere, close them? Where can France or Spain be wounded by us? When we cannot protect Jamaica, can we reconquer America? When Ministers begin to be afraid of keeping their places, will they intimidate others—except by their example? If *anybody* will be his own Minister, will he not be his only Minister? They have long thrown all the blame on him, and now it looks as if they would throw their offices on him too.

I met Lady Bute this evening; she expects Lord Macartney every hour. Thank you for the sight of Lady Macartney's letter, madam; but as I do not visit her, I cannot possibly on this occasion: it would look like assuming merit on good offices, which I could only attempt, but which I have not the smallest reason to think contributed to his return. Pray, madam, do not call this, or anything of the kind, modesty and humility—it is only humiliation, which is but pride mortified.

I see myself a poor invalid, threatened with a painful and irksome conclusion, and mortified at seeing the decay of my country more rapid than

my own. Ambition I never felt, but was content with being an individual in so free and splendid a nation. 'Tis all gone, madam; and methinks one sinks in one's own estimation in proportion.

When I mention my woes, however, it is to excuse my frequent excuses, not to complain of my lot, which has been singularly happy and fortunate. I am so at this moment, for I expect General Conway this week; and I shall think him as much recovered, as if I had seen a bomb in the air over his head.

Nov. 2nd.

I have heard nothing new to-day. If you can explain what I have been telling you, — and if you are not in the secret,—nay, if you are, perhaps you may not understand it, be so good as to decipher to me; but I am in no hurry. When Titus was at the gates of Jerusalem, can one read with patience the squabbles of the Pharisees?

P.S.—I must commend the honesty of your Milesians, madam. If forty thousand Scots were in arms asking redress, do you think they would have let the East Indian fleet depart from Limerick before they were satisfied?

LETTER CXLIV.

Strawberry Hill, Monday night, Nov. 3.

St. John is a false prophet, and of the house of Bolinbroke; the angel of the church of Philadelphia is a blind buzzard, and cannot see a yard beyond his

nose. A heathen Cupid, with a bandage over his eyes, is worth a hundred of such blundering cherubim, that, like bats, fly about in the dark, and take a farthing candle for the sun. There, my lady, there's Washington beaten, and Philadelphia taken! Commend me to Revelations! If your angel would be seeing, why did not he put on his spectacles and hover over Arnold, who has beaten the vapouring Burgoyne, and destroyed his magazines? Carleton, who was set aside for General Hurlothrumbo, is gone to save him and the remains of his army, if he can. On Saturday night, not a Minister but was packing up: yesterday morning, they ran about, shouting and huzzaing, like madmen!

LETTER CXLV.

Arlington Street, Tuesday, four o'clock.

I WROTE the above few lines last night, madam, and then heard that no confirmation was come. I most humbly beg pardon of Monseigneur St. Michael, or St. Ithuriel, or St. George Fox, or whoever is archangel of Philadelphia, for too lightly crediting Bamber Gascoyne's or Port Glasgow's lies. I am this minute come to town, and find that the ship "Argo" is as much arrived as the sloop "Isis," which turns out to be the "Asia," which is a large ship that has been long on a cruise. *It is believed,* from two or three letters from New York, that Washington has been

beaten; yet nothing more is known of the action or its consequences; and as Howe has sent no account, it does not seem to be any great matter. The papers to-day are full of a resuscitation and victory of Burgoyne, which even the dates shew to be manifest lies. It is doubted whether he will not have been forced to lay down his arms.

I received your ladyship's letter, with the extract of your *beaufrère's*, this morning, and another short one this minute. I have not a moment's time to speak on either; but you may easily imagine all the sentiments the extract roused, and which wanted but a spark.

I must be excused, just now, from answering, or even thinking of, Mr. Selwyn's query about I don't know what. You have not told me where the letter is, nor to what admiral; and, to say truth, I am not sorry, for I never had less time to solve historic riddles of ages past.

If I learn anything certain by to-morrow night, I will certainly write again; your ladyship and Lord Ossory must be anxious about Mr. F. and Lord Chewton, and I will neglect nothing that can tend to quiet your alarm; though, I must own, I doubt whether this whole history of Washington is not coined, to balance for a moment the destruction of Burgoyne's army, and the loss of Canada that may follow.

LETTER CXLVI.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 14, 1779.

I MUST be equitable; I must do the world justice; there are really some hopes of its amendment; I have not heard one lie these four days; but then, indeed, I have heard nothing. Well, then, why do you write? Stay, madam; my letter is not got on horseback yet; nor shall it mount till it has something to carry. It is my duty, as your gazetteer, to furnish you with news, true or false, and you would certainly dismiss me, if I did not, at least, tell you something that was impossible. The whole nation is content with hearing anything new, let it be ever so bad. Tell the first man you meet that Ireland has revolted; away he runs, and tells everybody he meets,—everybody tells everybody, and the next morning they ask for more news. Well, Jamaica is taken; oh! Jamaica is taken. Next day, what news? Why, Paul Jones is landed in Rutlandshire, and has carried off the Duchess of Devonshire, and a squadron is fitting out to prevent it; and I am to have a pension for having given the earliest intelligence; and there is be a new farce called the *Rutlandshire Invasion*, and the King and Queen will come to town to see it, and the Prince of Wales will not, because he is not old enough to understand pantomimes.

Well, madam; having despatched the nation and its serious affairs, one may chat over private matters. I have seen Lord Macartney, and do affirm that he is

shrunk, and has a *soupçon* of black that was not wont to reside in his complexion. George is so engrossed by the Board of Trade, that I have seen him but the morning after his arrival.

Mr. Beauclerc has built a library in Great Russell Street that reaches halfway to Highgate. Everybody goes to see it; it has put the Museum's nose quite out of joint.

Now I return to politics. Sir Ralph Payne and Dr. Johnson are answering General Burgoyne, and they say the words are to be so long that the reply must be printed in a pamphlet as large as an atlas, but in an Elzevir type, or the first sentence would fill twenty pages in octavo.

You may depend upon the truth of this, for Mr. Cumberland told it in confidence to one with whom he is not at all acquainted, who told it to one whom I never saw; so you see, madam, there is no questioning the authority.

I will not answer so positively for what I am going to tell you, as I had it only from the person himself. The Duke of Gloucester was at Bath with the Margrave of Anspach. Lord Nugent came up and would talk to the duke and then asked if he might take the liberty of inviting his royal highness to dinner? I think you will admire the quickness and propriety of the answer: —the duke replied, "My Lord, I make no acquaintance but in London," where you know, madam, he only has levees. The Irishman continued to talk to him even after that rebuff. He certainly hoped to have been

very artful—to have made court there, and yet not have offended anywhere else by not going in town, which would have been a gross affront to the duke had he accepted the invitation. I was at Blackheath t'other morning, where I was grieved. There are eleven Vanderwerffes that cost an immense sum: half of them are spoiled since Sir Gregory Page's death by servants neglecting to shut out the sun. There is another room hung with the history of Cupid and Psyche, in twelve small pictures by Luca Jordano, that are sweet. There is, too, a glorious Claude, some fine Teniers', a noble Rubens and Snyder, two beautiful Philippo Lauras, and a few more, and several very bad. The house is magnificent, but wounded me; it it was built on the model of Houghton, except that three rooms are thrown into a gallery.

Now I have tapped the chapter of pictures, you must go and see Zoffani's Tribune at Florence, which is an astonishing piece of work, with a vast deal of merit.

There too, you will see a delightful piece of Wilkes looking—no, squinting tenderly at his daughter. It is a caricature of the Devil acknowledging Miss Sin in Milton. I do not know why, but they are under a palm-tree, which has not grown in a free country for some centuries.

15th.

With all my pretences there is no more veracity in me than in a Scotch runner for the Ministry. Here must I send away my letter without a word in it

worth a straw. All the good news I know is, that the devil of a winter is come in that will send armies and navies to bed, and one may stir out in November without fear of being tanned. I am heartily glad that we shall keep Jamaica and the East Indies another year, that one may have time to lay in a stock of tea and sugar for the rest of one's days. I think only of the necessaries of life, and do not care a rush for gold and diamonds, and the pleasure of stealing logwood. The friends of Government, who have thought of nothing but of reducing us to our islandhood, and bringing us back to the simplicity of ancient times, when we were the frugal, temperate, virtuous old English, ask how we did before tea and sugar were known. Better, no doubt; but as I did not happen to be born two or three hundred years ago, I cannot recollect precisely whether diluted acorns and barley bread, spread with honey, made a very luxurious breakfast.

I was last night at Lady Lucan's to hear Misses Bingham sing Jomelli's "Miserere," set for two voices. There were only the Duchess of Bedford, Lady Bute, Mrs. Walsingham, the Brudenels, Keenes, Lord Macartney, George Selwyn, Mr. Jerningham, and half a dozen Irish. The service lasted near three hours, and was so dull, instead of pathetic, that I was rejoiced that the worst *was over, and the two women had left the sepulchre.* The duchess told me, that a habit-maker returned from Ampthill, is gone stark in love with Lady Ossory, on fitting her with the new dress. I think they call it a Levite, and says he never saw so glorious

a figure—I know that; and so you would be in a hop-sack, madam—but where the deuce is the grace in a man's nightgown bound round with a belt?

Good night, Lady! I hope I shall have something to tell you in my next, that my letter may be shorter.

LETTER CXLVII.

Codicil to my to-day's: viz. Nov. 15. 1779.

I ENCLOSED the above to Lord Ossory, because it was not worth sixpence, and had sent it to the post, and then went to Bedford House, where, lo! enters Lady Shelburne, looking as fresh and ripe as Pomona. N. B. Her windows were not open yesterday, and to-day there was such a mist, ermined with snow, that I could not see. I find it was not a habit-maker that was smitten with your ladyship as a pig in a poke, but somebody else; but as her grace's mouth has lost one tooth, and my ear, I suspect, another; I have not found out who the unfortunate man is.

Next enters your ladyship's letter. I have seen my dignity of minister to Spain—many a fair castle have I erected in that country, but truly never resided there. Voltaire's Dom Pedre is a poor performance indeed!

Mr. Cartwright, who, I humbly apprehend, is Mr. Carteret, is, I also apprehend, no better informed than his elder brother. So far from being gone to Cadiz, the French fleet, I believe, is gone to the hospital. Mr. Conway is not come; I trust from the obstinacy of

a contrary wind. It blustered violently on Saturday night, and made me very uneasy; but I think it was a wind full in his teeth. I have expected him for this fortnight—three days before the frigate sailed. This is long enough for a codicil, in which one has nothing more to give.

LETTER CXLVIII.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 21, 1779,

I AM sorry, madam, to inform you, if you have not heard it, that the troubles in Ireland ripen. An express came yesterday, that the independent army had invested the House of Commons, and forced the members to take an oath of voting for Free Trade and a short money bill. The mob, too, *palliser'd* the houses of the Attorney-General Scott and Sir Henry Cavendish, who had ventured to plead a little for the English Government. This is all I know yet, for I have been confined again these three days with the gout in my foot, and was not out of bed to-day till three o'clock.

Lord Weymouth has resigned, and quits his *bureau* to-morrow. This, I suppose, was what your ladyship meant by saying you heard the *sheath was absolutely thrown away;* if it is, I believe Lord Weymouth will run after it, for I think the sword will never be his weapon.

Nor can I admire any, who, after doing all the mis-

chief they could, cry out fire! That they will go to extremities I do not doubt—what principle should restrain them?

A few answers to your last and I have done, for I am a little in pain. I have not seen the Prologue and Epilogue to the "Critic," but am now very impatient, for I hear they are Mr. Fitzpatrick's, and will answer I shall admire them. If your ladyship has copies, I beg you will let them be transcribed and sent to me incontinently.

The story you have heard of a royal amour, I fancy, was founded on a letter that has made much noise, and was delivered by mistake to a wrong person. The circumstances are too numerous for a letter and were only the gossiping of two girls, who did not expect to have their correspondence rehearsed to the ladies of the bedchamber.

La Signorina I have not seen, and, in truth, did not ask to see her. I love David too well, not to be peevish at an Abishag of eight years old.

Should I hear anything before to-morrow night, it shall make a P.S., but I wrote to-day lest I should not be able to-morrow.

P.S.—22nd, from my bed.

I have had a bad night, though I expected a most tranquil one, for, about eight in the evening, as Lady Ailesbury and Mrs. Damer were sitting with me, the door opened and entered General Conway. As the wind had been violent, I was comforting myself that it was contrary; but he had landed at Portsmouth the

night before, after being blown to Plymouth. After his servants and baggage were embarked, the frigate was very near being lost.

I have seen nobody but him to-day, so cannot tell any more news.

LETTER CXLIX.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 29, 1779.

THOUGH you command, madam, it would be impertinent and ridiculous to talk of myself, when at the same time, the post will bring you Lord Ossory's account of Mr. Fox's duel. Could such an old story as the gout expect to fill a cranny of your attention at such a moment? Would not you hate any body or letter that could not answer fifty questions you want to ask in a breath? I would answer them beforehand if I were not just got into bed with a little return of pain. Oh, and Lord Lyttelton—in about three hours your ladyship will want to know all about him too. Would I could satisfy you, but just now I am not able, and therefore, after thanking you a thousand times, I must bid myself good night, and will answer your letter as soon as it is in my power.

LETTER CL.

Thursday evening, Dec. 2, 1779.

YOUR ladyship must excuse another short answer to the letter I have this moment received, for I am

extremely weak and low, the consequence always of the fever going off. My pains are gone everywhere but in my right arm and hand, which last is uneasy enough; but then I sleep and dose exceedingly; a most fortunate faculty in one that is so long decaying.

I am vexed that Lord Ossory or your ladyship should think it necessary to make an apology for his not calling on me before he went: I thought he called very often in so short a space; and I am always upon my guard not to let my tiresome illnesses torment others too. How should Lord Ossory, who comes but for a moment, and has a thousand friends, amusements, and politics, to drink at a draught, have time to come and sip my dregs of gout? Surely, surely, Mr. Fox's duel was sufficient to occupy him wholly for two days. Of all duels, on true or false record, this was the most perfect! So much temper, sense, propriety, easy good humour, and natural good nature, on a base of firmness and spirit, never were assembled. For Mr. Adam, I cannot describe him, as I never extracted malevolence out of the fogs of the Highlands.

Of poor Lady Jane, I own, I did not care to speak to your ladyship, as I knew how you would lament her; nor can I tell you much now about her death or will. I think her low spirits began before Lady Blandford's death; yet that might increase them. They increased to the greatest degree, and at last she died of obstinately refusing nourishment. The *Greenwich* did pretend to take care of her; I don't know whether she did, but I know she talked brutally about her.

I have heard that Lady Jane has left her fortune to Lady Frances, but am not sure.

I have heard Mr. Tickell's poem read once, and thought the beginning very bad. The allusions are not at all just, but forced into the service by vile puns. Towards the end there seems some very pretty lines; but, upon the whole, *à quoi bon? à quel propos?* I believe it was meant for a satire, but the author winked, and it flashed in the pan.

I have not seen the prologue, madam, but should seriously take it very kindly if you would send me a copy; indeed I want amusement.

I have not breath to dictate more, and must take my leave.

LETTER CLI.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 6, 1779.

I RETURN both poems, madam, with the fidelity and gratitude which they, the author, and your ladyship, deserve from me. The lines to Delia are very poetic, dressed with all the genteel ease of Mr. Fitzpatrick. The prologue is charming; and a short, just, and compendious history of the English stage.

I am told my account of Lady Jane's will was wrong, and that she has left her original 10,000*l.* to the Duke of Buccleuch, and to Lady Frances, only 250*l.* a-year, Petersham, and 1000*l.* in money; so the public had made a better will for her.

I lament not being able to be to-day where I seldom wish myself, in the House of Commons; but if I opened the current of regrets they would soon swell to a torrent; and I had better bid your ladyship good night, since I have nothing new to tell you.

LETTER CLII.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 14, 1779.

When Lord Ossory is in town, my dear madam, my letters are useless; and, when I can only dictate, they are not only *gênées* and insipid, but force me to exert my faint voice more than I can afford. I am now trying to scratch out a few lines with my muffled hand; and the effort must be accepted in lieu of length. In fact, I am impatient to thank your ladyship and Mr. Fitzpatrick for his intended offering to the armory at Strawberry, where it shall be consecrated on the 4th of November, a more solemn holiday there than the 5th. I recollect a story of James I., who, being seized with the cholic as he was hunting, stepped into a cottage, and complaining, the good woman of the house recommended a bullet to him to swallow, which she assured him had done wonders and had often passed through her whole family. I will preserve Mr. Fitzpatrick's present carefully, that so *sovereign* a medicine may have a chance of returning whence it came; and, in case of need, of going through all the Scots that deserve it.

You know, madam, I can give you no account of new beauties but what I hear: Miss Gore is much admired. Miss Lennox is said to be very well, but no more.

Lord Ossory's speech was thought very sensible and proper, and to have no fault but its brevity, which is never charged on speeches that are not liked. Hitherto all goes well for Ireland: I fervently hope the Irish will be as reasonable.

Recommend books to you, madam!—why, the manufacture is lost both in England and France! I believe nothing will be printed soon but ship news; and Wilkes's and Temple Lutterel's speeches, which they print themselves.

If Lord Ossory is returned to-day, as I conclude, pray tell him, madam, that I shall have a gallery of Dusseldorp for him at the original rate of six guineas.

You see, madam, there was no such miracle in Buckinger writing with his stump! I have some notion that all the limbs and members may serve as coadjutors to the others; but I will not surmise how far that may be carried, lest old folks like me should, as they are apt, attempt ridiculous experiments.

LETTER CLIII.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 23, 1779.

Alas, madam, I am very unlikely to enjoy even a more agreeable prison at Ampthill: all my advancement is retrograde; again, I can neither walk nor

write. The deluge, which your ladyship calls mild weather, as I suppose Noah did the moment his pair of peacocks ceased croaking for more rain, has brought back my gout particularly into my right hand; and, as I had no reason to expect a return, I have still less for guessing when it will depart. Lord Bristol died yesterday morning of the same distemper in his stomach: not three months ago he made a visit to the duke and duchess at the Pavilions, and good-naturedly called on me on his return, to persuade me to leave off the use of the bootikins, and to recommend a system of applications, I forget what, that had done wonders for him. I rose and stamp'd hard with both feet on the marble, and said, "This is what the bootikins do for me: your lordship, though now free from the gout, has been brought into my room by two servants: I will not blame your lordship's method, but can I exchange my own for it?" However, as Lord Bristol is delivered from the gout and I am not, it may be a moot point whether Martha or Mary has chosen the better part.

Lord Coventry and Colonel Hervey are Lord Bristol's executors. He has left an estate of 800*l.* a-year that he had purchased to Mrs. Nesbitt, for life, paying 300*l.* a-year to his natural son by Mrs. Clarke, (the Kitty Hunter,) till of age, and 400*l.* afterwards, he to have the whole if surviving her; if not, she and Colonel Hervey to have the property of the whole. His personal estate, estimated at 30,000*l.*, Lord Bristol divides between Mrs. Nesbitt and the aforesaid son. I do not

hear of another legacy, not even to his sisters. To Colonel Hervey he had in his life given their mother's house in St. James's-place.

I know no more of our new victories than your ladyship reads in the newspapers and gazettes; nor can one add to the ridicule which the Court itself has thrown on the business in Georgia, by firing guns, by efforts at illuminations, and by their method of retailing the intelligence by an anonymous letter, and by suppressing every syllable from General Prevost himself, &c. They had better have stuck to their triumphs on the Mosquito shore, which were heroic and perfect in every light, and the narratives of which seem to me the clearest relations of any battle or siege I ever saw.

The prospect does seem to clear up happily in Ireland. Oh, that we may come a little to our senses, and be softened into some wisdom by good fortune, as we have long been hardened in folly and obstinacy, by disappointment and disgrace!

You are to know, madam, that I have in my custody the individual ebony cabinet in which Madame de Sévigné kept her pens and paper for writing her matchless letters. It was preserved near Grignan by an old man who mended her pens, and whose descendant gave it last year to Mr. Selwyn, as truly worthy of such a sacred relic. It wears, indeed, all the outward and visible signs of such venerable preciousness, for it is clumsy, cumbersome, and shattered, and inspires no more idea of her spirit and *légèreté*, than the mouldy thighbone of a saint does of the unction of his sermons.

I have full powers to have it repaired and decorated as shall seem good in my own eyes, though I had rather be authorised to inclose and conceal it in a shrine of gold and jewels, as princely bigots serve the skulls and shrivelled corpses of their patron saints.

Lord Macartney is gone to Ireland; and, as many others are dispersing themselves, my circles will be very thin, though I must depend upon them for some time, for last night and this morning I have had pretty sharp pain in my hand. At the beginning of this fit, your ladyship commended my patience; alack! it is what I am reduced to ingraft upon temperance, which did not avail me. If I live to an hundred, I suppose I shall acquire all the other virtues, but the one which longevity makes a *sinecure*, and consequently requires no institution.

LETTER CLIV.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 1, 1780.

I ASSURE you, madam, I have no affectation of philosophic indifference to life. I like to live whenever I am free from pain, or do not look forward—but I have so comfortless a prospect before me—if I have any prospect before me, that it is no counterfeit levity when I speak with coolness of a moment that may spare me many sufferings, and what I dread still more, helpless decrepitude. But you shall hear no more of thoughts that I confess ought not to pass my own bosom, and which

Lord Bristol's death suggested. You are equally kind, madam, in being affected at what I said, and in recommending Bath; but indeed I cannot listen to that advice. Bath is excellent for those who are *in travail* of the gout, and seek a fit as a composition for subsequent health, but I certainly have no occasion to accelerate the attacks. They are made without any declaration of war, and I find myself a prisoner, as happened six weeks ago, when I thought myself most secure of a truce by the short fit in September. In short, my dear lady, Bath might give me the gout, but cannot cure it. My management of myself is formed on the best observations I can make on my own constitution after long experience: I certainly have less quantity of pain, and have shorter fits than formerly: I recover the use of all my limbs tolerably in the intervals, and my spirits still more; and therefore, when I am reckoned deaf to all advice, it is not from obstinacy, but from never having known one, who, doomed to an incurable disorder, had better success; or who, though Herculean to me, preserved his inside so strong, or his head and stomach so totally unattacked. I would not have said half so much, if gratitude for your ladyship's singular goodness had not obliged me to give you a rational account, to compensate for the idleness of what you dignify by calling it wit and phrases; though my expressions are but the colours with which I would skin over the reflections that arise in long illnesses, and that will sometimes slip into the pen when they are floating on the mind.

I gladly congratulate your ladyship and our lord on

the pacification of Ireland, which seems assured by the cordial reception given by both Houses there to the Quieting Bill. Their expressions are even pathetic and heroic; for instead of exulting on having extorted redress, they accept it with humility and gratitude. It now appears that that alarming struggle was fortunate: it has obtained what England ought to have conceded earlier, and what may enrich both countries; it leaves a sturdy army there, ready in the spirit of its hero of the Boyne to resist France or arbitrary power—a better guard than toleration of Papists to protect a Protestant constitution!

Methinks I am sorry, madam, that you did not accept for me even with thanks, as I should have done myself, Lady Shelburne's condescension in apologizing for not answering my card, which was totally unnecessary: mine was a mere *how-d'ye*—sure she will not think me capable of having complained! I could be as peevishly ceremonious as your great viceroy, Lord Buckingham, who I see is grown popular, with Lord Hilsborough and Lord North—the same insects do not thrive in both countries.

Lord Bristol has left a paper, or narrative of the Lord knows what, that is to be padlocked till his son is of age—nine years hence—and then not to be published while *whom God long preserve* is alive; this was leaving the boy a fortune indeed, if both live nine years! There, too, is another noble author—not for me, but for a supplement—I had rather the Earl-Bishop would publish his father's memoirs.

Last year began with a hurricane; this commences with a fog as thick as butter—I hope, an omen of our adversity softening, as mists never blow down trees nor blow away islands, and may clear up. This is a new species of divination, and may be called *the comparative:* and as every man is partial to a system he invents, however nonsensical, you will take it as a compliment, I hope, madam, if I wish you a happy new fog, and a thousand of them!

P.S. All my letter but on this page was written last night, the improvement of my hand is owing to having exchanged my bootikin for a glove—so the fog has been of service to me, and will consequently convince me of the reality of my discovery. Formerly the same prognostics foretold the downfall of the Turk and the cure of the toothache.

LETTER CLV.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 3, 1780.

WELL! madam, I shall love a fog as long as I live; it is the best weatherglass in Christendom, and then I spell it so well! Nostradamus was a baby to me. Nay, I now understand that text, which I never comprehended before, *of seeing as in a glass darkly.* Here has Captain Fielding brought in the whole Dutch fleet, with the life and soul, veins, arteries, blood and nerves of the squadron at Brest, which will now be a *caput mortuum.* The Dutch made no resistance; this is all I know yet, but

that their admiral is prisoner too. Now you expect a Dutch war—no such thing—at least you are a bad courtier if you conclude so. It is supposed that the French town of Amsterdam refused to pay taxes unless they might trade with France, but that the rulers of the Republic declared they would not *protect* such illicit trade; and some whispers, not very low, say, that Sir Joseph Yorke advised this capture, persuaded that Holland would not resent it. Such is the creed of the morning: I answer for nothing but being glad of the crippling of the French navy.

Here is another fresh piece of intelligence for which I do not love my friend the fog so much, though I believe it gives as much pleasure at St. James's. The back settlers in Carolina have risen, since Prevost's victory, to the amount of three thousand, have seized a town, and declared for the old government. Whatever contributes—and a straw will—to encourage the prosecution of that ruinous war, is very unpropitious.

Oh dear! I fear my fog was but a mist! The Dutch admiral fired a broadside, but struck on Fielding's first gun, and is brought in with all—but what we wanted—naval stores. If this last state, and not the first, is the truth (for remember, madam, I write as anybody passes by; and only stops to tell me something; and therefore warrant nothing), the Ministers may have blundered us into another war; and then it will be they, and not I, that have seen in a glass darkly.

Well! I shall not pique myself, madam, on adjusting the more or less of this event, which will be discussed,

contradicted, affirmed in every newspaper. My office is to dispatch away my letters with nine post horns blowing before them on the first singularity. The truth or falsehood is to follow after at their leisure in the state coach, and Don Welbore Ellis may then hand them out in ceremony if he pleases. The pleasure of a letter in the country is hearing something unexpected that sets everybody to chattering, guessing, reasoning in the dark, and wanting to hear more—and that more, when it comes, is generally far short of the expectation; so you shall have no second parts from me.

My last intelligence was wrong; Lord Bristol's codicil, now printed, seems to relate entirely to his father's papers, to nothing of his own; nay, it seems rather civilly than rudely meant as to the hour of publication, and to prevent disagreeable truths appearing with regard to the late Prince of Wales.

LETTER CLVI.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 8, 1780.

THOUGH I am always afraid of writing too often (however contradictory my practice may be), especially when I have nothing to tell you, madam, still it is impossible not to thank you for Mr. Fitzpatrick's verses, which are written with the ease of his common conversation, and in which the rhymes seem the most proper words that could have been chosen to express his thoughts; the reverse of which is generally the case. The

progress of cold and hot fits in female education are as naturally described; and your ladyship must allow, that if morality may disapprove, truth, who is less a party woman, must give her *imprimatur* to the contents; and therefore I cannot conceive why the author should be shy of letting his poem be seen. As Macduff says,

He has no children!

I have been out to take the air, and am going to Strawberry for a day or two to season myself, before I return into a bit of the world, into which I shall step as reluctantly and timidly as a boy into cold water. I am so demolished, decayed, and so nervous, that the clapping of a door makes me quiver like a poplar. My spirits, if I did not struggle, are disposed to sympathise with my nerves; but I think while one has any sense left, one may keep one's mind under government.

I do not agree, I confess, with our Lord and his brother about Ireland. The present calm may, perhaps, not be very permanent, that is, when the people shall find that trade does not enrich in a year or two, like a voyage to the East Indies. But as it is my opinion, that, except on accidental tumults, the people never have any strong operative passions but when actuated by artful interested leaders, I think those who set the late vehemence in motion will be very cautious how they play with such two-edged tools. The leading gentlemen of the country, I am persuaded, were overjoyed at having a pretence for being satisfied, *for* they were within a fortnight of seeing their authority

slip out of their hands, and pass to those who, having no opportunity of reaching English ministers, would have discovered treason in the estates and property of their own landed superiors. This is human nature. The great plead the distress of the people; but when they have nursed up the people to a consistency, somebody or other has shrewdness enough to discover that the great are the cause of the distress. This was on the point of happening in Ireland; but I am running into speculation, which is mighty apt to deviate into prediction, when I only meant to answer a paragraph of your ladyship's letter.

I know nothing more of the egg of a Dutch war that we laid last week, but that Count Welderen was at the King's levee on Wednesday, which surprised me. It was vexatious to have been disappointed of making the important seizure. My first object in politics is to demolish the French marine. My whig blood cannot bear to part with a drop of the empire of the ocean. Like the Romans, I would have Rome domineer over the world, and be free at home. The old man in me is sensible there is little equity in this, and that a good patriot is a bad citizen of the world: but a citizen of the world, as the world is constituted, would be the most useless animal in the creation, and as much *isolé* as the worthy man in the "Spectator," who passed his time in playing with his cat and taking a walk to Islington. To be of any use in a community one must act within a possible sphere, and the smaller the province one chooses the more good one

can do. I am persuaded that a good justice of peace, who confines himself to his own parish, is a more beneficial member of society than Brutus or Cato. However, there would be nothing but Tarquins and Cæsars if there was nothing but justices of the peace, and therefore one must not refine too much. I never did give a loose to my own disquisitions, but I found it as well to come back to my own common sense, and to the common routine of thinking.

LETTER CLVII.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 13, 1780.

You are very suspicious and very unjust, madam; and I must have been the most ungrateful of men, and the most blind to my own faults, I who am so writative and talkative to those I love, if I had meant the most indirect reproof for your ladyship's frequent and kind letters. I do not in the least guess what word you could interpret as a reproach. I know very little what I have written, but I will swallow my bible if I was guilty.

I return the verses as you command. I should like to have kept them, but have not even taken a copy without permission.

For three days I have been at Strawberry Hill, and was the better for it, though the weather was so sharp. I now go out, but like it so little, that I think I am not so well: my spirits do not stand mixed company;

but how should I not be out of order? I have this morning been visiting a royal duke, a serene margrave, and a king's daughter. Think what a constraint upon nerves, that for two months have been seeking repose on cushions and couches, and could scarce find it there!

The print of the sultan is not new to me; I had it four months ago. The Critic, I own, was not so new as I expected; and then my being ill versed in modern dramas, most of the allusions must have escaped me. Does not half the merit of the rehearsal depend on the notes? Excuse me, if I write no more, for I am fatigued; and pray do not suspect me of what I never could mean.

LETTER CLVIII.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 17, 1780.

THE letter I this moment received, madam, is a great mark of confidence indeed, and I wish I could repay it by reasons for dispelling your uneasiness. One of your apprehensions I think not a very solid one, at least a minute one in comparison of the greater clouds that threaten; I mean your dread of abuse. I know not why, nor how it can be directed personally to one amongst so many.

That the scene grows very serious there is no doubt; nor do I assume vanity from having possessed the spirit of prophecy; a most useless talent, as predictions

never serve as warnings. We know prophets are not honoured in their own country—where then should they be honoured? Where they are not known? Where probably they never are heard of? I believe your ladyship has heard me say, that whenever the tide should turn, it would be terrible; and that they who had been fools would, to excuse themselves, say they had been cheated.

Still I do not presume on having judged rightly once, nor shall pretend to go on divining; though I can guess at some things that will happen, but which are not so proper for a letter; and yet you might decipher some of my home-opinions from what I said in my last on the leaders in Ireland. In general, I think there is great confusion toward; nor can I foresee what its march will be. The end of its end is but too well to be guessed, which is very rarely consonant to its intentions; and therefore, even if necessary, not to be anxiously wished.

Age and illness naturally make me more tranquil than I should be at such a moment, if younger. *Esto perpetua!* is always at my heart to say to my country and its constitution; but the hand of my climacteric clock rusts at the hour of peace, and will let me wish nothing but to hear *that* strike. As I am as unlike Oliver Cromwell as possible, I do not like to depart in a storm; nay, if anybody would listen, I would preach moderation; but the superannuated can only sit quiet and observe the progress of the hurricane, or be swept away with it!

I did not write your ladyship an account on Saturday, as at first I had a mind to do, of Mr. Stanley's horrid exit, as I hoped it would prove one of those common ill-natured expositions of sudden deaths; but it was too true. He was found yet alive, and had given his throat two gashes, but was dead before the company could be fetched from the house. His will, made in July, was so reasonable, that it looks almost as if, having satisfied reason, he thought himself at liberty to indulge his frenzy; but, in fact, the delirium was almost instantaneous. At eleven he had written letters, and left an unfinished one open on his table, and then issued into the road to act his tragedy, where he was found.

He leaves his estate, about 5,000*l.* a-year, equally between his sisters, and to the survivor, with a jointure of 500*l.* a-year to either husband, if surviving. He gives the estate at Chelsea, that came from Sir Hans Sloane, about half of the whole, to his next relation, Lord Cadogan; the residue to Mr. Sloane, with his library at present, and the choice of four pictures; and a small estate in Wales to a most distant cousin (*vide* note at the end of my historic doubts), the late Mr. Rice, who being dead before him, the bequest is disputable. His not having altered that disposition is another proof that the madness was very recent. Nay, the evening before his death, or that very morning, he had expressed to one of the company his satisfaction in the way of life at Althorpe. In short, it is a most shocking story,

and with his father's catastrophe dreadful to the two sisters!

LETTER CLIX.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 29, 1780.

THE weathercock marquis has taken his part, or rather his leave, and resigned his key on Thursday. But there was a more extraordinary phenomenon in the closet the same day. Lord George Gordon asked an audience, was admitted, and incontinently began reading his Irish pamphlet, and the King had the patience to hear him do so for above an hour, till it was so dark that the lecturer could not see. His Majesty then desired to be excused, and said he would finish the piece himself. "Well!" said the lunatic apostle, "but you must give me your honour that you will read it out." The King promised, but was forced to pledge his honour. It puts one in mind of Charles II. at Scoon, before his Restoration. It is to be hoped this man is so mad, that it will soon come to perfection, unless my plan is adopted, of shutting up in Bedlam the few persons in this country that remain in their senses. It would be easier and much cheaper than to confine all the delirious.

Your ladyship asked me in your last, whether it was the situation of public affairs that affected my nerves; to be sure there would be more Roman dignity in answering, yes; but something less than truth. I fear one's country is never so near one's heart that

the clapping of a door gives it a palpitation. My total weakness and variety of pains, and the trepidation that the least surprise causes on my nerves, make me so occupied with self, that I doubt the case of poor crazy old England does not affect me so entirely as it ought; and as she, however crippled, will hobble on some how or other; and as my option lies only between suffering and extinction, the surviving world is but a secondary consideration. Nay, I am often divided between contrary shames; sometimes I blush at attending more to myself than to my *patria;* and sometimes, at being anxious about a scene in which I can take so little part, and which I must quit so soon! This incertitude is very natural—but as I have no time for affectation, I let myself go according as the several sensations rise uppermost; and the Whig, or the superannuated invalid predominates, as the weather-glass of my health mounts or sinks.

I enclose a copy of verses, which I have just printed at Strawberry, only a few copies, and which I hope you will think pretty. They were written three months ago by Mr. Charles Miller, brother of Sir John, on seeing Lady Horatia at Nuneham. The poor girl is better. Sir Richard Jebb pronounced her in a consumption; but he is such a raven that I did not believe him, nor do. The moment she came to town, the Duchess of Ancaster carried her for two days to Lady Elizabeth Burrell's; and as she returned better,

and not worse, as I expected, from such a scene, I am little alarmed for her.

When may one expect to see you in town, madam? or are you learning to skate *à la royale? A propos* I was diverted with your ladyship's calling my princes and princesses *my royal society.* It was as little in my calculation or plan to pass the end of my days with highnesses as with philosophers, *encore à propos*; Princess Amelie told us an excellent story t'other night of Lady Mary Coke. Her royal highness dines once a week at Lady Holdernesse's, with only the party for the evening loo. Lady Mary asked the same honour. The princess insisted on a very small dinner, as she has on those occasions—but found a banquet. As she sat down, the groom of the chambers presented to her, as she thought, an empty gilt salver—for what purpose she could not guess—but on it lay (what she had not seen, being so purblind,) two gold pins to pin her napkin, as is her way. Still she did not perceive they were of gold; and after dinner flung them away; when, to the eternal disgrace of magnificence, Lady Mary retired to hunt for her pins.

I forgot to ask you, madam, if you are not glad that Lord George Gordon is a Scot? Would one deny them the benefit of the Union, and monopolize lunacy ourselves? I was once talking to Craufurd on our frenzy, and he replied, "We are not mad."—"No," said I, "but you know we are, and profit of it."

LETTER CLX.

Feb. 2, 1780.

I CANNOT tell your ladyship precisely the story of the Duke of Ancaster's presentiment, for I have forgotten it, having heard it but once imperfectly, and being not apt to listen attentively to dreams and auguries: all I remember was, that once walking with her, he said something of foreseeing he should not live long.

I send your ladyship, as you order, Lady Craven's novel, which is, being very short, full of one long name, but not of long names. It is scarce a story, and I am told, is a translation; but it is very prettily told, and has, I will swear, several original expressions, that are characteristic, and must be her own. There is no mystery or secret about it, except that it was one to me for four-and-twenty hours, being sent to me anonymously, and I was all that time before I guessed the author. The reason of my not naming it, madam, you will find in my character, which abhors anything that looks like vanity. Though I am very proud of it, do I ever boast of your goodness to me? It is certainly very glorious

> To have contending Queens at dead of night
> Forsake their down—

and write for me or to me; but honours to me are never unaccompanied by retrospect to myself, where I behold nothing but a wretched skeleton, conscious

of a thousand faults and defects, ill-skinned over with one or two studied and negative virtues, and at my best time possessed of only mediocre and commonplace talents—which being a true picture, you will be so good, madam, as not imagine that I wish to have it retouched, and therefore do not send it me back varnished, I beseech you.

I must certainly agree with you, madam, about the two mad lords you mention, for you know I have long thought the whole nation out of its senses. I go farther now, for I am of opinion that, like some animals, who by instinct medicine themselves, we are going to apply that remedy of insanity, letting ourselves blood. Had the petitions been the tide of an universal torrent, they might have done what good they pleased; but I fear, with you, that that is not the case. Lord Cholmondeley told me that in Cheshire not one of the Whig gentlemen would sign the petition. In Norfolk, the county I know the best, there is scarce a name, except Mr. Coke's, of any of the great Whig or Tory families to the first signature. Nor can I believe, when three parts in four of England were with the Court, that even half have changed their opinions in one year, giddy as multitudes are. The Court has been thunderstruck with what has been already done; but will recover its spirits, and have a firm back game, for I do not find that one Scotch county has petitioned. If the petitioning committees receive no satisfaction, they will grow outrageous—and then—but I do not care to be a prophet. I like

petitions; it is a Whig measure. I wished for, and recommended them five years ago, when they might have checked at least infinite mischief, and prevented the waste of buckets of blood and treasure; but some heads of opposition were still too much in hopes of passing into the closet without breaking open the door! though Yorkshire could have been led to petition then as easily as now. Well! we must still hope the best. Principles are, or ought to be, permanent things; and if they are right, must not be influenced by temporary events. We must only take care not to mistake passions for principles, nor let the latter be the aggressors, especially when the path leads to blood. I dread the spilling of blood for itself. I dread drawing it, because, though the person may suffer, the Crown, nine times in ten, is the gainer; and I dread it more particularly now, because my Whiggism was taught to consider France as our capital enemy, and she will be most advantaged by our domestic feuds. The Court deserves everything that a ruined and dishonoured nation can inflict, and has left itself without excuse. Who could plead for it, when its own accomplices and tools fly from it?—But I do hope our friends will remember that we have enemies at sea as well as at land, and that the Temple will not be taken by the Romans, while we are pulling down the Pharisees.

P.S.—I write thus freely, because my letter goes by the coach with Lady Craven's book. It should not whisper my fears to the lowest courtier in the Post

Office, because it is better the Court should be alarmed and bend. Its *roideur* would produce all I apprehend.

LETTER CLXI.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 12, 1780.

I OBEY, madam, as far as writing, to shew my obedience; but I certainly cannot amuse you. Politics I disclaim, when Lord Ossory is in town; he sits at the fountain head, and I can get no purer a draught, than what is adulterated by Betty or Macpherson for their different customers. Yet when nothing is stirring but politics, what can I send? Oh! old Egerton is dead, and has left the Duke of Bridgewater but one thousand pounds of all his millions. They go to a sister and her children, and then to a Miss Sykes; and if she does not become a duchess, then to the above said duke. Another legacy of 5000*l.* is given to Mrs. Grey, by her husband's sister Lady Di. Middleton.

Everybody is full of Mr. Burke's yesterday's speech, which I only mention as parent of a *mot* of George Selwyn. Lord George Gordon, single, divided the house, and Selwyn set him down afterwards at White's, where he said, "I have brought the whole opposition in my coach; and I hope one coach will always hold them, if they mean to take away the board of works."

Lord Ossory assures me your ladyship will be here next week; it will be a red-lettered day in my al-

manac, from which the gout has expunged most of the festivals. Another shall be *Innocents' Day*, for the Ladies Anne and Gertrude — and I believe my devotions at my chapel of ease, in Grosvenor Place, will be as sincere, mind, I do not say, fervent, as Lady M. Fitzgerald's at the Lock Hospital, in the neighbourhood.

LETTER CLXII.

Strawberry Hill, June 1, 1780.

I THINK it my duty to give your ladyship a faithful account of Lady Warwick and her sisters, from an eye-witness who did not know it would be transmitted to you. Mr. Conslade is returned from Warwick Castle, and I questioned him minutely. He thinks the countess will recover, but it will be long and slow. He saw her but twice, and that as she was airing, for the least thing disorders her nerves. Miss Vernon is better, and he thinks, though very delicate, in no consumption. He commends both her and Miss Elizabeth extremely, and says he never saw more proper modest behaviour, and that both are very reserved.

This is all I really have to say, madam. Nay, though so proud of the honour of being your ladyships gazetteer, I foresee I shall be obliged to resign my office, for a reason that the present Ministers will think a very bad one—my being totally unfit for my place. It is too hard on a poor writer of an evening post, to be forced to labour in his vocation only in

summer. Mr. Bates had rather lie than speak truth; and for fear he should even be suspected of veracity, he has chosen the Duke of Richmond for the hero of his abuse—but I, who have no invention, and confine myself to matters of fact, cannot relate what never happened. Campaigns are out of my depth. I neither understand Lord Amherst, nor what he ought to understand—the army. I do not know a first rate from a tenth; nay, nor how many rates there are, nor how small a large ship may be. I cannot expound a gazette after all the pains in the world have been taken to make it unintelligible; and as our whole war consists in confounding the truth, I am not qualified to register King Mars's or Earl Neptune's campaigns. Since poor Lady Blandford's death I shall have no opportunity of meeting Lady Greenwich and hearing her break her bulk of scandal. There is not so untittletattling a village as Twickenham in the island; and if Mr. Cambridge did not gallop the roads for intelligence, I believe the grass would grow in our ears.

I have some other employments that I could wish to resign too; more exalted, though not so flattering; but having no salaries annexed to them, I should gain no patriot credit by giving them up. Nobody ever felt the slavery of Court attendance more than I did on Monday. The country was gushing with verdure and beauty, the day was sultry, and Strawberry as cool as a grotto—yet I was forced to go to town to a birthday and a ball!

> Oh! 'tis the sweetest of all earthly things
> To live with Princes and to talk of Kings!
> Then happy man who shews the tombs! said I.

The last line was certainly written for me, who love Westminster Abbey much more than levées and circles, and—no treason, I hope—fond enough of kings as soon as they have a canopy of *stone* over them.

On Tuesday I was asked to a conversation-piece at Lady Clermont's, and there I found that Thalestris, the Princess Daskiou, and her son and daughter. The lad is a tolerable Pompey; the daughter a perfect Tartar. The mother who I hoped had forgotten me, recollected our having passed an evening together at Northumberland House, as she told Lady Clermont; but as she did not claim me I shall not leave my name at her lodgings in blood-bowl alley.

Your Ireland, I find, has spoken out, though professing much decorum. The Chancellor is for firmness; as if frowns would pass more current in Ireland than in America. The heir-apparent of the seals, out of contradiction both to the Chancellor, and to his own treatment of Dr. Franklin, takes the side of acquiescence; and probably will prevail, for Lord Thurlow is in so bad a way that if he lives he is not likely to be able to execute his office.

Yesterday's papers say the Church of England is to assemble to-morrow in St. George's Fields, and to follow their metropolitan, Lord George Gordon, to the House of Commons, to demand that the defender of the faith should be forced to part with his whore of Babylon; so

his triple crown is in as much peril as his other diadems! but your ladyship can read the papers as well as I, and when I recur to them you must yourself be weary of a—Mercurius Rusticus.

LETTER CLXIII.

Berkeley Square, June 3, 1780.

I KNOW that a governor or a gazetteer ought not to desert their posts, if a town is besieged, or a town is full of news; and, therefore, madam, I resume my office. I smile to-day—but I trembled last night; for an hour or more I never felt more anxiety. I knew the bravest of my friends were barricaded into the House of Commons, and every avenue to it impossible. Till I heard the Horse and Foot Guards were gone to their rescue, I expected nothing but some dire misfortune; and the first thing I heard this morning was that part of the town had had a fortunate escape from being burnt after ten last night. You must not expect order, madam; I must recollect circumstances as they occur; and the best idea I can give your ladyship of the tumult will be to relate it as I heard it.

I had come to town in the morning on a private occasion, and found it so much as I left it, that though I saw a few blue cockades here and there, I only took them for new recruits. Nobody came in; between seven and eight I saw a hack and another coach arrive at Lord Shelburne's, and thence concluded that Lord

George Gordon's trumpet had brayed to no purpose. At eight I went to Gloucester House; the Duchess told me there had been a riot, and that Lord Mansfield's glasses had been broken, and a bishop's, but, that most of the populace were dispersed. About nine his Royal Highness and Colonel Heywood arrived; and then we heard a much more alarming account. The concourse had been incredible, and had by no means obeyed the injunctions of their apostle, or rather had interpreted the spirit instead of the letter. The duke had reached the house with the utmost difficulty, and found it sunk from the temple of dignity to an asylum of lamentable objects. There were the Lords Hilsborough, Stormont, Townshend, without their bags, and with their hair dishevelled about their ears, and Lord Willoughby without his periwig, and Lord Mansfield, whose glasses had been broken, quivering on the woolsack like an aspen. Lord Ashburnham had been torn out of his chariot, the Bishop of Lincoln illtreated, the Duke of Northumberland had lost his watch in the holy hurly-burly, and Mr. Mackenzie his snuff-box and spectacles. Alarm came that the mob had thrown down Lord Boston, and were trampling him to death; which they almost did. They had diswigged Lord Bathurst on his answering them stoutly, and told him he was the pope, and an old woman; thus splitting Pope Joan into two. Lord Hilsborough, on being taxed with negligence, affirmed that the cabinet had the day before empowered Lord North to take precautions, but two justices that were called denied having received any

orders. Colonel Heywood, a very stout man, and luckily a very cool one, told me he had thrice been collared as he went by the duke's order to inquire what was doing in the other house; but though he was not suffered to pass he reasoned the mob into releasing him,—yet, he said, he never saw so serious an appearance and such determined countenances. About eight the lords adjourned, and were suffered to go home; though the rioters declared that if the other house did not repeal the bill there would at night be terrible mischief. Mr. Burke's name had been given out as the object of resentment. General Conway I knew would be intrepid and not give way; nor did he, but inspired the other house with his own resolution. Lord George Gordon was running backwards and forwards, and from the windows of the Speaker's Chamber denouncing all that spoke against him to the mob in the lobby. Mr. Conway tasked him severely both in the house and aside, and Colonel Murray told him he was a disgrace to his family. Still the members were besieged and locked up for four hours, nor could divide, as the lobby was crammed. Mr. Conway and Lord Frederick Cavendish, with whom I supped afterwards, told me there was a moment when they thought they must have opened the doors and fought their way out sword in hand. Lord North was very firm, and at last they got the Guards and cleared the pass.

Blue banners had been waved from tops of houses at Whitehall as signals to the people, while the coaches passed, whom they should applaud or abuse. Sir

George Savile's and Charles Turner's coaches were demolished. Ellis, whom they took for a Popish gentleman, they carried prisoner to the Guildhall in Westminster, and he escaped by a ladder out of a window. Lord Mahon harangued the people from the balcony of a coffee-house and begged them to retire; but at past ten a new scene opened. The mob forced the Sardinian Minister's Chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and gutted it. He saved nothing but two chalices; lost the silver lamps, &c., and the benches being tossed into the street, were food for a bonfire, with the blazing brands of which they set fire to the inside of the chapel, nor, till the Guards arrived would suffer the engines to play. My cousin, T. Walpole, fetched poor Madam Cordon, who was ill, and guarded her in his house till three in the morning when all was quiet.

Old Haslang's Chapel has undergone the same fate, all except the ordeal. They found stores of mass books and run tea.

This is a slight and hasty sketch, madam. On Tuesday the House of Commons is to consider the Popish laws. I forgot to tell you that the bishops not daring to appear, the Winchester bill which had passed the Commons, was thrown out.

No saint was ever more diabolic than Lord George Gordon. Eleven wretches are in prison for the outrage at Cordon's, and will be hanged instead of their arch-incendiary. One person seized is a Russian officer who had the impudence to claim acquaintance with the Sardinian Minister, and desire to be released. Cordon

replied, "*Oui, Monsieur, je vous connoissois, mais je ne vous connois plus.*" I do not know whether he is an associate of Thalestris, who seems to have snuffed a revolution in the wind.

I hear there are hopes of some temperament in Ireland. Somebody, I forget who, has observed that the English Government pretends not to *quarter* soldiers in Ireland, and therefore must be glad of a bill. It is time some of our wounds should close! or, I believe, I shall soon have too much employment, instead of wanting materials for letters.

LETTER CLXIV.

Strawberry Hill, June 23, 1780.

I ENTREAT your ladyship not to suspect yourself of impertinence when you are obliging; nor me of indirect meanings, when I speak plainly. I did see Lord Ossory on Tuesday, and you will find that though I avoided details, my answer was the outline of what had passed. It is a subject on which I never love to write; because to begin it has the air of an air, which I dislike; and when one answers, one cannot, at every sentence, say, "pray don't repeat this;" or, "this may be repeated." And yet that is necessary on points that occasion discussion, and on which one does not like to be quoted.

Considering what a crop there is of discordant opinions, and the quantity of matter that enters into

head-dresses at present, it will be very serious, madam, if the ladies come to pulling caps. The fields of battle will be strewed with strange fragments! but every thing seems to be returning to chaos! I am come back to this little nook, in hopes it will escape the general hurly-burly. Lord Ossory agreed with my sentiments more almost than any man I meet with. Mine about this country, I own, are total despair: nor do I see from our present position, our present generation of actors, and from our present enemies, whence aught but ruin should come, either to the nation or constitution, and probably to both,—and if either is undone what signifies the other? The felicity of universal confusion encourages a war within a war; and the attention to the internal one will absorb all regard to the other; and by the time absolute power is attained, it will, like abstract powers, be charming in speculation, but prove to be nothing but the *vis inertiæ*. I am weary of such scenes and prospects, and have quitted them. There may, perhaps, be farther combustions; but whether expected or not, we shall affect to expect them, and prepare—not to prevent, but to profit of them; which, I doubt, was a little the case lately. Have you never known a chambermaid, madam, that would tick at a chandler's shop to the amount of six or seven shillings, rather than part with a favourite crown-piece?

I have got the print of Lady Gertrude,* but it is

* From Sir Joshua Reynolds' picture of her as a child in my possession.—Ed.

poorly executed, and faint and unfinished; however, it is sweetly pretty, though it has not half the countenances of the original. Pray tell me, when you have taken one, where your new house is. Do you really move, like a pawn, only an inch farther in Grosvenor Place?

My hay is cut, and it has rained all day: well, madam, is it not better to have only annual distresses, than to attend to old Madam England's cancers and amputation of limbs? I am trying to learn all the doctrines of selfishness, and to care for nothing but my own enjoyments. If it is true that the love of one's country and such virtues are but emanations of self-love, is it not wise to lop them when they no longer flatter one's vanity? In short, to speak with the dignity that becomes every man who prefers himself to all the world, if my country is ever worthy of me I will think on it again! if the prodigal does not return and repent, I will eat the fatted calf by myself.

LETTER CLXV.

Strawberry Hill, June 29, 1780.

If your ladyship did not give me themes, I should certainly not think of writing, for I know nothing but what the "Morning Chronicle" said yesterday, and have thought on nothing but my hay, though I have not a load half so big as a lady's head-dress; but the weather is so benevolent, that I sit amongst the reapers

till nine at night, and do not wish myself on the parade.

I had heard of Lord Grantham's match, and suppose he has contracted some Spanish ideas, and minds blood more than beauty. If the lady ceases to be your neighbour, she will become more your acquaintance. I know no more of the Duchess of Ancaster's misfortunes, and heard before I came out of town that Lady Willoughby was out of danger.

The Princess Daskiou was here this morning with her horde of Tartars, but I kept out of sight, having nothing to regale her but one old horse. I have paid my visit to Lord and Lady Sefton, who do not suit me quite so well as poor Lady Blandford.

Have you heard, madam, that on Lord Effingham's coming to life, report has shot old Lord Godolphin? The monument to be sure would as soon head a riot.

I have deferred my journey to Malvern for a fortnight or three weeks; I shall regret Strawberry less in August; and, besides, have been remarkably well for this last fortnight; and, besides, find it mighty difficult to set about anything, so totally is all my activity gone. I think there is nothing but your ladyship that has not lost influence over me. You can make me exert even a talent I never had, as I am going to give you a proof. The lines are indifferent enough, but prompt obedience, like charity, can cover a dozen bad verses; and as I scribbled them while the Tartars were in the house, and send them by the return of the post, you may be sure I do not think them fit to be

shewn, and beg you will not let them go out of your hands. The theme was too good not to be better treated; and what will do in a private letter will not stand criticism, and still less, if taken for a cool design of venting indignation; but here they are, and if they will provoke Mr. Fitzpatrick to write better, you and I shall both be better satisfied.

> When mitred masters o'er a groaning land
> Extend the church's all usurping hand,
> No more our woods are ours; our mansions slide
> To glut some pontiff's patriarchal pride;
> And star-chambers in laws defiance grant
> Whate'er the Gospel's appetites can want.
> Hence then—nor longer o'er the genial room
> Shall Laud's ill-omen'd aspect hurl its gloom.
> No tyrant Stuart shall to croziers give,
> And borrow from the gift, Prerogative.
> Each free-born lord shall his own rights assert,
> Nor vassals be enchain'd but by the heart;
> While each calm Ossory's benignant smile
> Diffuses old good-humour round our isle.

Heart and assert are bad rhymes, and do not agree in sound or sense, but are like an address that echoes a royal speech with the unfelt protestations of slaves.

Pray send me directions to your camp; do the Infantas make the campaign? The report here is that the parliament is immediately to be dissolved, in hopes of another Phœnix rising out of the ashes of London. In that case I conclude Lady Gertrude will remain at Ampthill to keep open house. The *province* of Bedfordshire I trust will stick close to the house.

LETTER CLXVI.

July 18, 1780.

HAD I known whither to direct, I should not have waited for your ladyship's congratulations (which I owed you on Lady Shelburne's delivery), but should have announced Lady Maria's approaching coronet. It has many agreeable faces (after some shades). The best, next to the splendour, is the satisfaction which all Lord Egremont's family express on the occasion. Lady Egremont, Count Bruhl, Mr. Herbert, and Lady Elizabeth, have been presented at Gloucester House; and Mr. Marsham and Lady Frances are coming to town on purpose. You will, I believe, approve that having full powers to treat with Lord Egremont, I told him the duchess would leave the terms to him, that no advantage would be taken of his passion, and that he should decide what he should think was proper for his widow and the duchess's daughter. Lady Egremont very handsomely told me, that if it was left to the lawyers they would be guided by her jointure, which is but two thousand; but as the times are more extravagant and more dear now, she thought Lady Maria ought to have three. It is pleasant to deal in this way, and not commence union with a family as if one was undermining it; so now I am to have Sir William Windham's grandson for one of my numerous nephews! I believe I shall live to be the world's uncle.

You have lost your neighbour, Mrs. Page, I hear, madam, and that she has made a very reasonable will and dispensed her money pretty equally amongst the Howes.

July 18.

I wrote the preceding page some days ago on receiving your ladyship's last, and in expectation of a direction; but it is arrived so late, that it has made all I have said stale; however, I send it, as it tells you what relates to our great wedding; except that my moderation has not been adopted, but the jointure is to be four thousand, and the pin money one. The wedding we think will be in about three weeks.

I am glad your ladyship bathes in so beautiful a prospect; though I think the Tritons enjoy a better when you bathe. Glastonbury I never saw; the Peter Burrell, the proprietor, I suppose is either the uncle of Mr. Burrell, the present Lord Consort of Willoughby, or he himself; I know the grandfather's name was Peter. You are too hard, I think, on the remarried widower. His marrying again so soon is, in my opinion, a better proof of his love for his last wife, than his creation of a monument for her. He was impatient to be as happy as he had been. It requires more philosophy to venture a second time, when the first marriage is unprosperous. Your account of the bishop's tomb at Glastonbury, madam, seems typical of what is coming. The bishop was kicked into the abbot's kitchen, you say, and then defaced by the soldiers. Abbots may-hap may grow luxurious on the spoils of bishops, and

the army complete the depredation. Most of the present bench deserve such a fate.

Your Lady Jacob reminds me of what happened to myself five-and-twenty years ago. I went to see the painted glass of Messing Church, in Essex, and dined at an ale-house. The landlady entertained me with *bon mots* of *Mr. Charles*, just as if I had known him, and was much surprised I had never heard of him. He was a Mr. Charles Luckyn, a younger brother or uncle of the late Lord Grimston, had been dead some years, but had been the George Selwyn or Hare of that village—such is fame! This is a copy in miniature of that admirable chapter in Voltaire, where a Chinese goes into a bookseller's shop, and they are mutually astonished at each other's ignorance of the great names in their different regions.

I am forced to comment your paragraphs, madam, for I have nothing to send you in return. The only novelty I know, is, that we have had a riot of our own at Richmond, where an embankment for barge horses being carried before Mr. Colman's (the manager) garden by the city, he, feeling himself, like Agamemnon, a king of kings, behaved with equal *hauteur*, and levied a mob to destroy the works, which they did with hatchets last week in open daylight. The city, three days after, sent a naval force, consisting of one barge with a committee on board, who seized thirteen of the rioters, and sent them to London where they were bailed; but the barge remains *encamped* near the bridge, according to the precedent in London; yet,

notwithstanding the terror spread through Europe by the camps in the two parks and by the barge at Richmond, fifteen Russian men-of-war are arrived at Copenhagen, and are expected southwards, with no friendly dispositions towards us. But what signifies any credit we lose abroad, while we are all *puissant* at home, and can bestow the diadem of Greenwich Hospital on Sir Hugh Palliser? Is not it more eligible to be emperor of ten miles round London, than to extend our empire as Lord Chatham did from the Oronooco to Japan?

I shall conclude this rhapsody with a dismal adventure that happened to me yesterday. The door opened and Margaret entered with her apron spread over both arms, as a midwife presents a child to be baptized, and bearing, as I thought, the longest, leanest, naked babe I ever beheld. As she approached, I perceived that master or miss had no head, but a bloody neck. Heavens! said I, what have you got there? A friend of mine has sent me a fawn, if your honour pleases to accept it. For heaven's sake, said I, take it away, I could as soon eat a child: however, I did call her again, and begged her pardon for having treated her present so brutally; but one must have been a cannibal to have ever borne the sight of it again.

The duchess told me to-night, at the pavilions, that your aunt is going to carry her grandson abroad, and takes the two Misses Vernon, and not her niece Dorothea.*—Whence comes that dereliction?

* Dorothea Wrottesley, married, 1780, Baron Kutzleber, Minister

I am sorry I have no talent for piscatory eclogues, since your fishermen are so polished and harmonious, and their fish-wives such flageolets, Eelinda and Salmonia would be musical names, and Turbotto and Jan Dorado of no harsh sound; but you say, *when you climb the hills*—alas! I can climb still less than write poetry—oh! on looking again at your ladyship's description, I see I have made a mistake, and that you ask not what Mr. Burrell, but what Mr. Bladen is proprietor of Glastonbury. In truth, I know not—I know *I* am proprietor of the chair of Johannes *Arthurus* the monk of Glastonbury, and once made the present Archbishop of Canterbury sit in it at breakfast; but I will reserve it now for a real abbot. It is too much honour for a renegade. If the pope sends us a genuine Austin, well and good.

I do now expect all Martinico ships safe in Torbay—not because Sir Hugh is president of crippled sailors, but because *Venus orta mari mare præstat eunti.*—Good night, madam.

LETTER CLXVII.

Saturday evening, 6th.

If there is a sprig of truth left growing in Bedfordshire, I entreat your ladyship to spare me a cutting, for there is not a leaf to be had in town for love or money, everything is so dear! and yet falsehood bears

from Hesse Cassel, survived her husband, and died 2d Oct. 1822. She was the daughter of Rev. R. Wrottesley and Lady Mary Leveson Gower, consequently niece to Gertrude Duchess of Bedford.—Ed.

a still higher price. Jamaica is taken, and it is not; the combined fleets are sailed, and they are not; the East India men are arrived, and are not; Lord Gower is out, and is not; Lord Northington is dead, and is not.

The edition of "Gower," privately printed at Glasgow, says he has been out these three weeks; but the critics say that cannot be so, for, &c.

Lord Weymouth's servants say he is to resign. Some say Lord Bathurst is to be president, and Lady Cranborne says, her Lord. Lord Macartney is come, but we have missed each other. They say he is dismally lean and black. George and the signorina arrived last night. Lord Mount Stuart is at Paris—or not. You see how friendly I am, madam. Nobody tells you anything, and I tell you both sides of every thing. Your humble servant. JANUS.

P. S.—Very good sport in Nubia.

LETTER CLXVIII.

Strawberry Hill, June 6, 1780.

You will think me amazingly callous to politics, madam, when you see my date is from the country. In truth I came hither on Sunday to avoid the birth-day; and stay, because Mr. Hindley's house is again to be sold by auction in half an hour; and—if one ever is to have a tranquil moment again, it is very important to know who is to be my Ucalegon, and live at next door. I write a few lines, because I have this instant received

two letters at once from your ladyship, and must thank you for the old protest which has contracted the hue of a MS., and to answer a few of your questions, or to tell you that I am not qualified to satisfy them.

I know no more of Saint George Gordon, but that I would change his last name into Cordon, and baptise him with a halter. We have reports here of some continuance of riots, but of late I credit nothing till after two or three rebounds. All I gleaned more of the tumult on Friday was, that the Archbishop of York, who was above stairs in a committee, hearing of Lord Mansfield's danger, flew down, rushed through the crowd, and carried off his friend in Abraham's bosom. The Duke of Richmond told me this with great approbation. A Mr. Holroyd, a member, told the Gordon that he ought to be sent to Bedlam, but that he himself would not quit him a moment, sat by him, followed him up into the gallery—and, in short, prevented his farther addresses to the mob.

You ask about Mr. Selwyn: have you heard his incomparable reply to Lord George Gordon, who asked him if he would choose him again for Luggershall? He replied, "his constituents would not." "Oh, yes, if you would recommend me, they would choose me if I came from the coast of Africa." "That is according to what part of the coast you came from: they would certainly, if you came from the Guinea Coast." Now madam, is not this true inspiration as well as true wit? Had one asked him in which of the four quarters of the world Guinea is situated, could he have told.

I knew nothing of my nephew Cholmondeley's lending or dismissing his incumbrances. I shall rejoice in both. I do not allow that there was anything execrable in the play but the actors. I was charmed with both prologue and epilogue, and with the delivery of both. I have read neither, but liked the latter full as well as the former. I may change my opinion on examining them.

I do believe there is some truth in Miss K.'s story. I know no more of the haggle between Lady J. and your cousin Duke, nor a syllable of her daughter, not even who the baronet is. In fact, I do not look at all after the next generation and their valentines, except my own tribe, and they are so numerous, and there have been so many *contretemps* about them, that I abstract my attention as much as I can, and leave the private as well as the public to chance, who at least has some decision, which I see in nobody else.

We had an exceedingly pretty fire-work last night on the bank of the Thames, at that most beautiful of all spots that was Mr. Giles's, and is now one Franco's a Jew, who gave the entertainment in honour of the day. I carried Lady Browne thither; my horses were frightened at the rockets, and we stepped out of the chaise and stood by the river till we were blighted by the east wind, and smothered by the smoke, for our *freeborn weather*, that on Monday and Friday was as hot as Lord George, is now as cold as the Duke of Devonshire.

I shall go to town to-morrow, and you see, madam, do not decline my duty, when I have a word to say; but not having a grain of penetration, I did apprehend my summer letters would be very barren. I have been so far wise, that I never would embark in anything that made it expedient to maintain a character, which is a horrid burthen on an Englishman. I may mistake and guess wrong, and change my mind, or talk nonsense, with impunity. I shall not be thought more trifling than usual. And is not it some comfort not to be the worse for wear?

LETTER CLXIX.

Wednesday, five o'clock, June 7, 1780.

I AM heartily glad I am come to town, though never was a less delicious place; but there was no bearing to remain philosophically in the country, and hear the thousand rumours of every hour, and not know whether one's friends and relations were not destroyed. Yesterday Newgate was burnt, and other houses, and Lord Sandwich near massacred. At Hyde Park Corner I saw guards at the Lord President's door, and in Piccadilly met George and the Signorina, whom I wondered he ventured there. He came into my chaise in a fury, and told me Lord Mansfield's house is in ashes, and that 5000 men were marched to Kane Wood—it is true, and that 1000 of the Guards are gone after them. A camp of 10,000 is forming

in Hyde Park as fast as possible, and the Berkshire Militia is just arrived. Wedderburne and Lord Stormont are threatened, and I do not know who. The Duchess of Beaufort sent an hour ago to tell me Lord Ashburnham had just advertised her that he is threatened, and was sending away his poor bed-ridden countess and children; and the duchess begged to know what I proposed to do. I immediately went to her, and quieted her, and assured her we are as safe as we can be anywhere, and as little obnoxious; but if she was alarmed, I advised her to remove to Notting Hill, where Lady Mary is absent. The Duchess said the mob were now in Saville Row; we sent thither, and so they are, round Colonel Woodford's who gave the Guards orders to fire at Lord Mansfield's, where six at least of the rioters were killed.

The mob are now armed, having seized the stores in the Artillery Ground.

If anything can surprise your ladyship, it will be what I am going to tell you. Lord George Gordon went to Buckingham House this morning, and asked an audience of the King. Can you be more surprised still?—he was refused.

I must finish, for I am going about the town to learn, and see, and hear. Kane Wood is saved; a regiment on march met the rioters.

It will probably be a black night: I am decking myself with blue ribands like a May-day garland. Horsemen are riding by with muskets. I am sorry I did not bring the armour of Francis I. to town, as

I am to guard a duchess-dowager and an heiress. Will it not be romantically generous if I yield the latter to my nephew?

From my garrison in Berkeley Square.

P.S. The pious insurgents will soon have a military chest. They took forty-five guineas from Charles Turner yesterday.

LETTER CLXX.

Wednesday night, past two in the morning, June 7, 1780.

As it is impossible to go to bed (for Lady Betty Compton has hoped I would not this very minute, which, next to her asking the contrary, is the thing not to be refused), I cannot be better employed than in proving how much I think of your ladyship at the most horrible moment I ever saw. You shall judge. I was at Gloucester House between nine and ten. The servants announced a great fire; the duchess, her daughters, and I went to the top of the house, and beheld not only one, but two vast fires, which we took for the King's Bench and Lambeth; but the latter was the new prison, and the former at least was burning at midnight. Colonel Heywood came in and acquainted his royal highness that nine houses in Great Queen Street had been gutted, and the furniture burnt; and he had *seen* a great Catholic distiller's at Holborn Bridge broken open and all the casks staved; and since the house has been set on fire. At

ten I went to Lord Hertford's, and found him and his sons charging muskets. Lord Rockingham has 200 soldiers in his house, and is determined to defend it. Thence I went to General Conway's, and in a moment a servant came in and said there was a great fire just by. We went to the street door and thought it was St. Martin's Lane in flames, but it is either the Fleet prison or the distiller's. I forgot that in the court of Gloucester House I met Colonel Jennings, who told me there had been an engagement at the Royal Exchange to defend the Bank, and that the Guards had shot sixty of the mob; I have since heard seventy, for I forgot to tell your ladyship that at a *great* council, held this evening at the Queen's house, at which Lord Rockingham and the Duke of Portland were present, military execution was ordered, for, in truth, the justices dare not act. After supper I returned to Lady Hertford, finding Charing Cross, and the Haymarket, and Piccadilly, illuminated from fear, though all this end of the town is hitherto perfectly quiet, lines being drawn cross the Strand and Holborn, to prevent the mob coming westward. Henry and William Conway arrived, and had seen the populace break open the toll-houses on Blackfriars Bridge, and carry off bushels of halfpence, which fell about the streets, and then they set fire to the toll-houses. General Conway's porter has seen five distinct conflagrations.

Lady Hertford's cook came in, white as this paper. *He is a German Catholic:* he said his house had been attacked, his furniture burnt; that he had saved

one child, and left another with his wife, whom he could not get out; and that not above ten or twelve persons had assaulted his house. I could not credit this, at least was sure it was an episode that had no connection with the general insurrection, and was at most some pique of his neighbours. I sent my own footman to the spot in Woodstock-street; he brought me word there had been eight or ten apprentices who made the riot, that two life-guardsmen had arrived and secured four of the enemies. It seems the cook had refused to illuminate like the rest of the street. To-morrow I suppose his Majesty King George Gordon will order their release; they will be inflated with having been confessors, and turn heroes.

On coming home I visited the Duchess Dowager and my fair ward; and am heartily tired with so many expeditions, for which I little imagined I had youth enough left.

We expect three or four more regiments to-morrow, besides some troops of horse and militia already arrived. We are menaced with counter-squadrons from the country. There will, I fear, be much blood spilt before peace is restored. The Gordon has already surpassed Masaniello, who I do not remember set his own capital on fire. Yet I assure your ladyship there is no panic. Lady Ailesbury has been at the play in the Haymarket, and the Duke and my four nieces at Ranelagh, this evening. For my part, I think the *common* diversions of these last four-and-twenty hours are sufficient to content any moderate appetite; and as it

is now three in the morning, I shall wish you good night, and try to get a little sleep myself, if Lord George Macbeth has not murdered it all. I own I shall not soon forget the sight I saw from the top of Gloucester-house!

Thursday morning after breakfast.

I do not know whether to call the horrors of the night greater or less than I thought. My printer, who has been out all night, and on the spots of action, says, not above a dozen were killed at the Royal Exchange, some few elsewhere; at the King's Bench, he does not know how many; but in other respects the calamities are dreadful. He saw many houses set on fire, women and children screaming, running out of doors with what they could save, and knocking one another down with their loads in the confusion. Barnard's Inn is burnt, and some houses, mistaken for Catholic. Kirkgate says most of the rioters are apprentices, and plunder and drink have been their chief objects, and both women and men are still lying dead drunk about the streets: brandy is preferable to enthusiasm. I trust many more troops will arrive to-day. What families ruined! What wretched wives and mothers! What public disgrace! — ay! and where, and when, and how will all this confusion end! and what shall we be when it is concluded? I remember the excise, and the gin act, and the rebels at Derby, and Wilkes's interlude, and the French at Plymouth; or, I should have a very bad memory; but I never till last night saw London and Southwark in flames!

After dinner.

It is a moment, madam, when to be surprised is not surprising. But what will you say to the House of Commons meeting by twelve o'clock to-day, and adjourning, ere fifty members were arrived, to Monday se'nnight! so adieu all government but the sword!

Will your ladyship give me credit when I heap contradictions on absurdities—will you believe such confusion and calamities, and yet think there is no consternation?—Well, only hear.—My niece, Mrs. Keppel, with her three daughters, drove since noon over Westminster-bridge, through St. George's Fields, where the King's Bench is smoking, over London Bridge, passed the Bank, and came the whole length of the city! They have been here, and say the people *look* very unquiet; but can one imagine that they would be smiling? Old Lady Albemarle, who followed me in few minutes from Glo'ster House, was robbed at Mrs. Keppel's door in Pall Mall, between ten and eleven by a horseman. Sparrow, one of the delivered convicts, who was to have been hanged this morning, is said to have been shot yesterday as he was spiriting up the rioters. Kirkgate has just heard in the Park, that the Protestant Association disavow the seditious, and will take up arms against them. If we are saved, it will be so as by fire.

I shall return to my own castle to-morrow: I had not above four hours' sleep last night, and must get some rest. General Conway is enraged at the adjournment, and will go away too. Many coaches and

chaises did leave London yesterday. My intelligence will not be so good nor so immediate; but you will not want correspondents. Disturbances are threatened again for to-night; and some probably will happen, but there are more troops and less alacrity in the outlaws.

LETTER CLXXI.

Berkeley Square, June 9, at noon, 1780.

ALL has been quiet to-night as far as we know in this region; but not without blood being spilt yesterday. The rioters attacked the horseguards about six in Fleet-street, and, not giving them time to load, were repelled by the bayonet. Twenty fell, thirty-five were wounded and sent to the hospital, where two died directly. Three of the guards were wounded and a young officer named Majoribank. Mr. Conway's footman told me he was on a message at Lord Amherst's when the guards returned, and that their bayonets were steeped in blood.

I heard, too, at my neighbour duchess's, whither I went at one in the morning, that, the Protestant Associators, disguised with blue cockades as friends, had fallen on the rioters in St. George's fields and killed many. I do not warrant the truth, but I did hear often in the evening that there had been slaughter in the Borough, where a great public-house had been destroyed, and a house at Redriffe, and another at Islington. Zeal has entirely thrown off the mask and owned its name, plunder. Its offspring

have extorted money from several houses with threats of firing them as Catholic. Apprentices and Irish chairmen, and all kinds of outlaws, have been the most active. Some hundreds are actually dead about the streets, with the spirits they plundered at the distiller's; the low women knelt and sucked them as they ran from the staved casks.

It was reported last night that the primate, George Gordon, is fled to Scotland: for aught I know he may not be so far off as Grosvenor-place. All is rumour and exaggeration; and yet it would be difficult to exaggerate the horrors of Wednesday night: a town taken by storm could alone exceed them.

I am going to Strawberry this instant, exhausted with fatigue, for I have certainly been on my feet longer these last eight-and-forty hours, than in forty days before. I forgot to tell your ladyship that as I came to town I saw in chalk on a hack at Hammersmith, "*God blast the Pope*,"—now the soldiers tear away blue cockades—and, when I return next, I expect to read on the walls, "*De par le Roi, Regiment de Picardie.*"

Adieu! madam; allow my pen a few holidays, unless the storm recommences.

LETTER CLXXII.

Strawberry Hill, Saturday night, late.

WAS not I cruelly out of luck, madam, to have been fishing in troubled waters for two days for your

ladyship's entertainment, and to have come away very few hours before the great pike was hooked? Well, to drop metaphor, here are Garth's lines reversed,

> Thus little villains oft submit to fate,
> That great ones may enjoy the world in state.

Four convicts on the eve of execution are let loose from Newgate, and Lord George Gordon is sent to the Tower. If he is hanged, the old couplet will recover its credit, for Mr. Wedderburne is chief justice.

I flatter myself I shall receive a line from your ladyship to-morrow morning: I am impatient to hear what you think of *black Wednesday*. I know how much you must have been shocked, but I long to read your own expressions; when you answer, then one is conversing. My sensations are very different from what they were. While in the thick of the conflagration, I was all indignation and a thousand passions. Last night, when sitting silently alone, horror rose as I cooled; and grief succeeded, and then all kinds of gloomy presages. For some time people have said, where will all this end? I as often replied, where will it begin? It is now begun, with a dreadful overture; and I tremble to think what the chorus may be! The sword reigns at present, and saved the capital! What is to depose the sword?—Is it not to be feared on the other hand, that other swords may be lifted up?—What probability that everything will subside quietly into the natural channel?—Nay, how narrow will that channel be, whenever the prospect is cleared by peace?

What a dismal fragment of an empire! yet would that moment were come, when we are to take a survey of our ruins! That moment I probably shall not see. When I rose this morning, I found the exertions I had made with such puny powers, had been far beyond what I could bear; I was too sick to go on with dressing myself. This evening I have been abroad, and you shall hear no more of it. I have been with Lady Di., at Richmond, where I found Lady Pembroke, Miss Herbert, and Mr. Brudenell. Lord Herbert is arrived. They told me the melancholy position of Lady Westmorland. She is sister of Lord George Gordon, and wife of Colonel Woodford, who is forced to conceal himself, having been the first officer who gave orders to the soldiers to fire, on the attack of Lord Mansfield's house. How many still more deplorable calamities from the tragedy of this week that one shall never hear of! I will change my style, and like an epilogue after a moving piece, divert you with a *bon-mot* of George Selwyn. He came to me yesterday morning from Lady Townshend, who, terrified by the fires of the preceding night, talked the language of the Court, instead of opposition. He said she put him in mind of removed tradesmen, who hang out a board with, "Burnt out from over the way." Good night, madam, till I receive your letter.

Monday morning, the 12th.

Disappointed! disappointed! not a line from your ladyship; I will not send away this till I hear from you. Last night, at Hampton Court, I heard of two

Popish chapels demolished at Bath, and one at Bristol. My coachman has just been in Twickenham, and says half Bath is burnt; I trust this is but the natural progress of lies that increase like a chairman's legs by walking. Mercy on us! we seem to be plunging into the horrors of France, in the reigns of Charles VI. and VII.!—yet, as extremes meet, there is at this moment amazing insensibility. Within these four days I have received five applications for tickets to see my house! One from a set of company who fled from town to avoid the tumults and fires. I suppose Æneas lost Creüsa by her stopping at Sadlers Wells.

13th.

The letter I have this moment received is so kind, madam, that it effaces all disappointment. Indeed my impatience made me forget that no post comes in here on Mondays. To day's letters from town mention no disturbance at Bristol or anywhere else. Every day gained is considerable, at least will be so when there has been time for the history of last week to have spread, and intelligence from the distant counties to be returned. All I have heard to day is of some alteration to be made to the Riot Act, that Lord George cannot be tried this month, and that the King will go to the house on Monday. I will now answer what is necessary in your ladyship's, and take my leave, for as you observe, the post arrives late, and I have other letters that I must answer. Mr. Williams interrupted me, and has added a curious anecdote,—and a horrible one, to my collection of the late events. One project

of the diabolic incendiaries was to let loose the lions in the Tower, and the lunatics in Bedlam. The latter might be from a fellow feeling in Lord George, but cannibals do not invite wild beasts to their banquets. The Princess Daskiou will certainly communicate the thought to her mistress and accomplice, the Legislatress of Russia.

George, I think, need not fear Mimy's being reclaimed; when parents can give up a child, I have no notion of their caring what becomes of it.

My cousin, the Miss Townshend, whom your ladyship mentions, is quite a stranger to me. My nephews, nieces, and cousins compose such a clan, that with all my genealogic propensities, I never saw all of them, though it seems this young lady is one who, according to the proverb, knows Jack Pudding. She shall certainly command a ticket for Strawberry, and I actually inclose one; but when you talk of enthusiasm, madam, it is impossible to make an acquaintance on that ground; it would be Jackpudding-ing myself in good earnest.

I do not know whether I am glad or sorry that you must remove from Grosvenor-place. That will depend on your future habitation; but I must finish, and would, if I dared, return the *Dearest*—but there would be a *soupçon* of the Jack Pudding in that too, and therefore I don't.

P.S. I like an ironic sentence in yesterday's "London Courant," which says, all our grievances are *redressed.*

LETTER CLXXIII.

Berkeley Square, June 16, at night.

DEPEND upon it, madam, you will always find my conduct simple and void of mystery. I have but two reasons for silence, ignorance, or from what secrets I know being those of others, not my own. The former was the cause of my not mentioning the reconciliation of the King and his brothers. I knew nothing of it but common report till Tuesday last, when Miss Keppel told me in a postscript that the Duke of Glo'ster had asked an audience, and been graciously received. On Thursday the duchess herself sent me word of it, and desired me to come to town. I came to-day, and have been with her this evening; and when I came away just now, which was past eleven, the duke was not come back from Kew, where he had been to pass the evening with the Prince of Wales. Not a word has passed between the brothers about the duchess. But you may understand that the two dukes have different ideas, for the Duke of Cumberland was at the drawing-room yesterday without his Duchess; and the Duke of Glo'ster was not. For the command of the army, I believe his Royal Highness expects it no more than I do. This is the naked truth, and which I could not have told you six hours ago: in my last, to have talked vaguely of what I did not know, would really have looked mysterious.

The conquest of Charlestown is a great event at the

present moment: not a good one, if it ensanguines us against peace. I neither understand military details nor love them for that reason. But this success is coupled with a very remarkable event. A Colonel Scott, I think a prisoner, says the Americans are sick of the war, but have been buoyed up by Spanish gold, and by *French promises of the conflagration of London* —a hellish sort of war, but who set the precedent? The Court talk much of a plot, and this anecdote is corroborative. Indeed I cannot at all agree with Mr. F.* in wishing Lord George Gordon may not be found guilty. He is so black in my eyes already, that though I have infinite compassion for criminals, I never heard of one I should pity less. If he is the source of our being ruled by an army, I shall abhor him still more. Have you heard, madam, that the common soldiers style one another *your worship*, as being the only Justices of Peace?

I have sent to inquire after Mr. Fox, and hear he is better with great pleasure. General Conway was setting out for Jersey, but the alarm was ill-founded. I know nothing of Lord Beauchamp's deposition against the Lord Mayor, but what I saw in the papers. Mr. Duane, I believe, is not yet settled at Twickenham, as the house and court are full of workmen; but I have had no time yet to make my visits, or think of them. Nor have I seen Miss Vernon; nor have I been to the Twilights at Bedford-house. In truth, I have thought of nothing but that horrible Wednesday and its conse-

* Probably Mr. Fitzpatrick, afterwards General.—Ed.

quences. Those that I immediately apprehended, insurrections and like tumults in the country, seem, thank God, not likely to ensue. My disorder was merely fatigue, and a sick mind. I long to sink into calm stupidity. These tempests brush me up and revive me for a moment, but I had rather wear out quietly with my Dowagers of Twickenham at Tredrille. This country cannot recover its splendour: it will be for some time the seat of distractions; and, when exhausted, be an insignificant solitude under a Bashaw. I have no loftier wish than to be one of the owls that hoot in an obscure village in the evening, and leave desolated cities to vultures and beasts of prey.

LETTER CLXXIV.

August 1, 1780.

YOUR ladyship's last letter and mine might have curtsied and bowed on the road, for they certainly passed each other; nay, they might have chatted over their own contents, as they were both full of the same subject. I shall not resume it, as you may imagine how thoroughly I must be tired of it. I will only add, that the duchess, however offended, had antecedently taken such an aversion to her future son-in-law, that she is delighted the match failed: and I will swear that the abandoned is no mourning bride, but far more gay than during his preposterous courtship. Still, I allow they are unfortunate girls to have missed so many

spendid marriages as they have been flattered with. They are like the prints of Edward V., and have had coronets hanging over their heads that never lighted on them. They have been with me here since last Friday, and on Monday received a visit that gave them great joy. Their heroic cousin William arrived before any of us came down to breakfast, and I made them keep him to dinner. They could not receive a proposal with more modesty than he did my compliments on his late victory. He has promised to dine with us again to-morrow; but did not forget to desire I would make his compliments to your ladyship the first time I should write.

Though *our* story has made so much more noise, it is not touching and melancholy like the silent one your ladyship tells me of poor Mrs. Byng. I remember to have heard at the time that Lord Torrington was the sole cause of his brother's ruin.

I find my materials run so short, that I shall postpone my letter to another post. These last ten days have been totally engrossed by my own family: when once one has told the story, it is not fair to teaze others with impertinent collateral circumstances that are important to nobody but the concerned.

Wednesday 3rd.

William *the Prudent* kept his word, stayed all night, and left us this morning before breakfast. I do not wonder his cousinesses are so fond of him: if he is Mars at sea, he is smooth as a calm at land. He tells us from Navestock that the Parliament is to be dis-

solved next week, which I find is the general opinion. My nieces leave me to-morrow, and are to be woodland nymphs for the rest of the season. I shall go to Park Place next week for a few days, and perhaps to Nuneham, if the lord and lady are there, of which I am not certain; nor shall I, if there is a general election, for I abhor hearing details of elections.

The Countess Cowper is at the point of death with a cancer. This is all the news our region furnishes.

LETTER CLXXV.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 16, 1780.

No wonder you were charmed with Mount Edgcumbe, madam. You have described it justly by saying, *It has the beauties of all other places added to peculiar beauties of its own.* You must have felt too for its lord and lady, who last year beheld above one hundred ancient oaks growing exactly where they ought, felled to make room for a battery! I was not less pleased with your phrase of the old gentlewoman's *open-armed way of receiving you.* You must have been touched with her cordiality, when you express it so significantly, for you have given a picture in one epithet, that is more pathetic than a description. I have no prospects, no adventures, to send your ladyship in return. My own little landscape is brown and parched. A sultry east wind has reigned for eight-and-twenty days, and left us neither grass nor leaves. This is the third summer that our climate has been

growing as Asiatic as our government; and the Macphersons and Dalrymples, I suppose, will hail the epoch of the introduction of camels and dromedaries in lieu of flocks of sheep; yet a Russian fleet riding in the Downs is a little drawback on our Ottoman dignity.

Lady Barrymore is not dead, as I told you, madam, but better. The parliament too, I hear, is not to be dissolved till next month. We news-writers cannot always warrant our goods; nor are falsities a discredit to the profession. Paragraphs of news are like roasted chestnuts; not one in twenty is sound. They are like mottos too, wrapped in sugar, which every body breaks, finds nothing worth reading, and yet goes on cracking.

I was not so much misinformed about Miss Ingram's match. Lord William is gone to Temple-Newsham, *en famille*, and, they say, Lady Irwin is to pay his debts. I enlarge my qu. instead of effacing it.

It is not decent to trouble his majesty's postman with such a scrap as this, filled only with recantations and repetitions; and therefore I shall reserve it till the wind changes, when we expect cargoes of novelties, and such victories, as nothing but a new parliament is worthy of hearing.

If the Russian squadron happens, like other folks, to insult Plymouth, I suppose you will go to see it, unless the very names of the commanders terrify you, for they sound as if selected to affront us. What think you, madam, of Captains Cocuffsoff, Boscarcuff, Huncuff, and Melnicuff? I wish such tremendous appellations do not

imprint terror enough to recall the camps into the two Parks! They are at least as terrible as the schoolboys, the black maid, and the servant girls that have been hanged for obliging both Houses of Parliament to adjourn, and for burning London about the Government's ears.

This morning I made my annual visit to the north, and was received by my lady, with whom I found that superlative jackanapes, Mr. Eden. He flung himself upon the settee, and thence distributed airs of protection, as far as was consistent with giving himself no sort of trouble. The contrast was perfect, Lady North was all humility and civility; the *commis parvenu* seemed to be giving audience.

Friday night, 18th.

I dined at Ditton to-day, and though Lord Beauchamp, a great news-merchant, was there, I did not learn a tittle. We have had rain and a west wind, but as it is again turned to the N.E. we must still wait for the fate of the West Indies; but as my letter might be quite stale—no, I think it could not be less interesting, if it lay in my drawer this month—well, it shall go. One cannot be always in the year '59, and have victories fresh and fresh for every post-day. We have camps at home, instead of conquests abroad, and Lady Amherst's assemblies on the parade, in lieu of French cannon in Hyde Park. I remember an old ironic song of Estcourt, with this passage:—

How with bloody French rags he has litter'd poor Westminster-hall,
O slovenly John Duke of Marlborough!

Future Scotch historians will have no occasion to decry our present commanders; nor treaties of Utrecht and Paris to refund our conquests! So the present glorious æra will, at least, wipe off one national reproach, our woful talent at negotiation. Nobody can say Mr. Eden made a shameful peace.

LETTER CLXXVI.

Strawberry Hill, Wednesday, Aug. 23, 1780.

I WENT to town yesterday, madam, and arrived just time enough to learn the desolation of Jerusalem. Our whole outward bound fleets for East and West Indies are taken by the Spaniards, as in a drag-net; though *they* are not reckoned able fishers. Seven companies of General Rainsford's new raised troops for Jamaica, and two of Lord Macleod's, and two ordnance-ships for the East, are included in this great prize. I could not send you the virgin account in time, for Lord Macartney told me your ladyship had ordered him to direct his letters to Ampthill, and that you should stop at Bowood. As the waters are so troubled, I conclude your host will resume *his* fishing-tackle. The Parliament, it is now said, will not be dissolved. The pendulum of our council seems to vibrate very irregularly.

In the evening, I went to Dr. Graham's. It is the most impudent puppet-show of imposition I ever saw, and the mountebank himself the dullest of his pro-

fession, except that he makes the spectators pay a crown a-piece. We were eighteen. A young officer of the Guards affected humour, and tired me still more. A woman, invisible, warbled to clarinets on the stairs. The decorations are pretty and odd, and the apothecary, who comes up a trap-door, for no purpose, since he might as well come upstairs, is a novelty. The electrical experiments are nothing at all singular, and a poor air-pump, that only bursts a bladder, pieces out the farce. The doctor is like Jenkinson in person, and as flimzy a puppet. I hope his brother, whom Mrs. Macaulay married, is not such a wooden thing on wires.

The Countess Cowper is at last delivered from her misery. She died with consummate courage, and, at the same time, with the weakness of trying to conceal the cause of her death. I have heard no particulars of her will. I believe she had little to bequeath, nor has given but trifling legacies from her son. This is an important event only in this neighbourhood, and that only as it serves for conversation. If you correspond with a villager, you must, now and then, madam, take up with our gossipry. Another on our list of burials is a Sir Patrick Hamilton. His history is curious. He has an estate of 1800*l.* a-year in Ireland, but has lodged at Twickenham for three or four years, watching impatiently an ancient uncle, who has some money. The old gentleman, formerly a captain in the Scotch Greys, is now eighty-eight, but as beautiful and sleek as Melchisedec, when he

was not above two hundred, and he walks four or five miles every day, and looks as if he would outlive his late heir for a quarter of a century more. Sir Patrick was knighted when mayor of Dublin. His lady is still more parsimonious. In his mayoralty, he could not persuade her to buy a new gown. The pride of the Hamiltons surmounted the penury of the Highlands. He bought a silk that cost five-and-fifty shillings a yard, but told his wife it cost but forty. In the evening, she displayed it to some of her female acquaintance. "Forty shillings a yard! Lord, madam," said one of them, "I would give five-and-forty myself." "Would you, madam? You shall have it at that price." Judge how Sir Patrick was transported, when he returned at night, and she bragged of the good bargain she had made!

Mr. Browne has shewn me his designs for improving Belvoir Castle. They shew judgment, and *would be* magnificent. I asked whence the funds were to arise, for I hear the duke's exchequer is extremely empty. Sir Sampson Gideon follows him round Cambridgeshire, and discharges the bills his grace leaves unpaid.

I have been writing letters and soliciting votes for Lord Macartney to be governor of Madras; and yet can scarce wish to succeed: yet there is merit in not despising twenty thousand a-year, in an age when commands over Indian mines and foreign embassies are thought below the acceptance of the beggars at Brookes's.

Friday, 25th.

Lady Hertford has brought me a "Morning Post," in which are mighty compliments to *me*, yes, to *me*. This shews the value of praise and abuse, and how judiciously they are dispensed! The Duke of Richmond, the living temple of virtue, is the object of calumny — I of commendation! Yet methinks my principles do not entitle me more to panegyric from a pensioner than the duke's. It talks, too, of my extensive learning, which always makes me laugh— no mortal's reading has been more superficial.

I heard last night that the Russian fleet only lifted up its leg against us, and is returned; and to-night that Lord Vernon is dead. If I receive no orders to-morrow from your ladyship, I shall send this to Ampthill. On Monday I shall go for two or three days into Kent to visit Mr. Barrett, and see Knowle again, and some other places.

Saturday.

My lady says nothing; go to Ampthill, letter!

LETTER CLXXVII.

Berkeley Square, Aug. 31, 1780.

MY DEAR LORD,

As I told Lady Ossory in my last that the Parliament was *not* to be dissolved, I write one line to contradict myself; for, though you are in no danger, I hate to give false intelligence. It is to be dissolved to-morrow.

I returned from Kent last night, and am going to

Strawberry as fast as I can, to avoid hearing of elections. When the Russian fleet was candidate for the Downs, and the Court dared to set up nobody against it, it is not worth inquiring about petty boroughs. I should as soon care about what passes at a vestry. When we are quite prostrate, I suppose we shall have *the* member of Parliament, as there is still *the* senator at Rome. Yours most, &c. H. W.

LETTER CLXXVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 1, 1780.

THERE have been twenty cross purposes, madam, and I have been a sufferer by them all. Lord Macartney told me your ladyship had ordered him to direct to Ampthill; accordingly so did I. Then you stayed in the west, and I went into Kent. You directed your letter to me here, and here it waited for me, and here I found it to-day, and learn that you are to be in town to-day in a new house still in Grosvenor-place, for you move no farther than a pawn. I am as sorry for poor Mrs. Crayle as George Selwyn was for poor Mrs. Craufurd whom he had never seen; and a good deal more sorry for his muscular pains, but do not at all interest myself about his election, nor any other body's election, while nobody will interest himself about any thing else for these six weeks. I heard, as I passed through the town that the Parliament was to be dissolved—a curious moment to be sure—but I suppose

it is a measure to make the whole nation drunk, lest it should be afraid of the French and Spanish fleets! or regret the two that we have lost! It is certainly wise to lay ourselves open to every kind of attack, for every one that is missed counts for a victory on our side. We should not be half so glad of the arrival of the ships from the Levant, if we had not lost those that were going to the East and West. This sort of wisdom must captivate *me*, it is so like my own. I believe I have told your ladyship that I reckon it is five to one better for me that my hay should be spoiled than not, because, as I have five cows and but one horse, the cows will eat bad hay and the horse will not. However, you may be sure I admire the verses and perfectly agree with them: the Ministers are full good enough for the people. You may depend, madam, on my neither shewing nor naming; not only from fidelity, but because coarser dainties than pearls are good enough for swine.

I have not been capering at balls in the torrid zone like your ladyship's neighbourhood, but I have been jolting over stony roads in the midst of Africa; at least I thought so, though in the heart of Kent. I have seen nothing very charming, and little new. One place struck me much, but more from recollection of old passages than from any curiosity in itself. This was Deane, a trist old seat of the Oxendens, now deserted; but it was long the residence of Sir George, who in my very youth was the fine gentleman of the age; extremely handsome, a speaker in parliament, a

lord of the treasury, very ambitious, and a particular favourite of my father—till he became so of my sister-in-law. That, and a worse story, blasted all his prospects and buried him in retirement—

> For when a courtier's out of place,
> The country shelters his disgrace.

Portraits of him, and some heroines of the time—now totally forgotten, but fresh in my memory, seemed a waking vision. It was like Æneas's meeting Dido in the shades. I could not have conceived that scenes in which I was not in the least interested, could have made so strong an impression; yet they really affected me as if I were beginning the world again. I could not shake off the sensations till I came to Knowle; and that was a medley of various feelings!—Elizabeth and Burleigh, and Buckhurst; and then Charles and Anne, Dorset and Pembroke, and Sir Edw. Sackville; and then a more engaging Dorset, and Villiers, and Prior; and then the old Duke and Duchess, and Lady Betty Germaine, and the Court of George II.!

The place is stripped of its beeches and honours, and has neither beauty nor prospects. The house, extensive as it is, seemed dwindled to the front of a college, and has the silence and solitude of one. It wants the cohorts of retainers, and the bustling jollity of the old nobility, to disperse the gloom. I worship all its faded splendour, and enjoy its preservation; and could have wandered over it for hours with satisfaction; but there was such a heterogeneous housekeeper as poisoned

all my enthusiasm. She was more like one of Mrs. St. John's Abigails, than an inhabitant of a venerable mansion; and shuffled about in slippers, and seemed to *admire* how I could care about the pictures of such old *frights* as covered the walls!

When the coast is clear, and your elections over and gone drunk to bed, I shall be very happy, madam, to wait on you at Ampthill. I have been better for these three months than in the last five years; and, though I do not allow myself to draw notes upon futurity, I like to employ my moments of health to the best advantage. Those I gladly give to the few I love—sickness and pain one should keep to one's self.

LETTER CLXXIX.

Sept. 12, 1780.

When the Bedfordshire election is over, and Lady Spencer has been chaired at St. Alban's, I shall be ready to steal to Ampthill, madam; but would not for the mines of Golconda find myself in the midst of one of those combustions: I should be, according to the incomparable and picturesque simile, like a dog in a dancing-school. I was like anything still more awkward and confused last week. Coming out of Lady Di.'s in the dark, I missed my way and pitched headlong down a perpendicular bank into a brick pavement laced with orange tubs and flower pots, broke two of the latter to powder, and yet only bruised my hand

and slightly hurt my hip. Had I weighed more than gossamer, I must have been dashed to pieces.

Your ladyship has been very charitable to Mr. Byng; but what must Lord Torrington feel, if he has any feeling, to know his brother eats the bread he has, from a minister whom the elder always opposed! This, I should think, would wound one to the quick.

Admiral Keppel is thrown out at Windsor; but, though all the royal bakers, and brewers, and butchers, voted against him, you must not imagine it was by mandate, whatever Ramus the Page might say; for his Majesty himself told the admiral that he hoped he would carry his election: how saucy in his own servants to thwart his wishes! I know nothing at all worth writing: of all dull letters, a short one is the best.

LETTER CLXXX.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 23, 1780.

THOUGH I care so little about elections, madam, (because I have such a contempt for the aggregate when it is assembled,) I feel for the vexation your civil war produces, and will produce to your ladyship and Lord Ossory; and take it as a mark of your persuasion of the interest I must adopt in all your affairs, that you are so good as to communicate the detail. I hope you will triumph at least; which is very consolatory, when one has no more than the disappointment of antagonists to lament. You will be so glad to see

your house empty for a day or two, and have the empty bottles removed, that I will not encumber you the only moment you can breathe. Indeed I could not well, for I have advertised my long-delayed last volume of Painters, to come out, and must be in town to distribute it. I seized this opportunity to publish it, because I was sure nobody would think of it or me, and that it will have a favourable chance for being taken no notice of. It is a debt I owed, and I will take care to incur no more. My cousin and namesake is come into Parliament, which baptizes me *the old H. W.*—and then one must not play the fool. Charles Fox, I have just heard, has beaten Lord Lincoln from the hustings, of which I am very glad. George Selwyn has been here for a moment, this morning, on the road from *his* defeat. I did not quite enjoy him, as his errand was to give a glimpse of my house to the Signorina and the official Signora Madre, and he would point out twenty things to them of which they had no more conception than of the Apocalypse; yet he entertained me with some of his calamities; they hanged him in effigy, and dressed up a figure of Mimie, and pinned on its breast these words, alluding to the gallows, "this is what I told you, you would come to." From Gloucester, he went to Luggershall, where he was received by ringing of bells, and bonfires—"being driven out of my capital," said he, "and coming into that country of turnips, where I was adored, I seemed to be arrived in my Hanoverian dominions." *This* paid for the burden of the governess and child! There

are other folks who would feel more comfortable among their turnips just now, than in their castle, having been treated on the terrace with the sight of crape-cockades inscribed, "For Admiral Keppel."—If *Ich Dien* does not wear one, he at least, I hear, *boudes* those who voted against the admiral—so, victories may be bought too dear!

I am trembling at every letter I receive from Paris. My dear old friend, I fear, is going! The last, which was on Tuesday, had left her at the twentieth day of a fever. To have struggled for twenty days at eighty-four shews such stamina that I have not totally lost hopes—but yet that letter was worse than the three preceding, which had much flattered me. It will be a grievous loss—but when one is old one's self, one cannot have many such misfortunes.

Miss Wrottesley's* 5000*l.* will purchase a princely turnippery; but I doubt even that nor a baron will indemnify her for the capital she quits—and yet, 5000*l.* will soon, I believe, buy a principality in England.

LETTER CLXXXI.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 27, 1780.

I REJOICE in your triumph, madam, though I cannot partake of your fireworks. Not only had I ordered my books to be advertised, but I have a more melancholy cause that detains me. The letters that I

* Mentioned before as the Duchess of Bedford's niece, Dorothea.

have received to-day from Paris, bid me be prepared to receive an account of my dear old friend's death. I knew she had been very ill, but till these two last posts, I had been flattered that she was recovering. To-day her own secretary, and Mr. T. Walpole, pronounce that there are no hopes. I had sent James's powder, and had begged my cousin, if possible, to obtain her trying it—but alas! I knew France too well, and physicians too, and THEIR physicians still more, to have much hope of its being given; but it is too shocking to be told that the physician has laid aside all medicines, and yet would not suffer her to take it! When is it best to try it but in despair? and when, if not at eighty-four? He said, it would vomit her, and kill her. Is not he killing her himself by trying nothing? and by not trying the powder in that case? This is a horrible thought, though she could not be immortal; and the terror I have been under for some time of her becoming deaf, added to blindness, had made me more reconciled to her great age, and to the probability of losing her. She retains, that is, did retain her senses, did not suffer, knew her situation, and was perfectly tranquil, and spoke little; but by the whole description, she appears to me to have been almost worn out. I tremble for the next letter—though it is just as if I had already received it.—Another friend gone! I scarce have one left of above my own age. It is these memorandums, that at the same time reconcile one to one's own departure. What can one expect but to survive one's friends if one lives

long?—In this unhappy mood, madam, I should be bad company. Can I care about elections? If an opponent's death could set Mr. Burke to moralizing on the hustings, at Bristol, how must the loss of so dear a friend affect me! The savage physician exasperates me; what transport should I have felt, if I could have saved her, though but for six months! Perhaps I could not—I will not be unjust; it is probable that I should not—but oh! not to let me try! It augments my abhorrence of physicians and professions. Long ago I said that the Devil's three names Satan, Lucifer, and Beelzebub, were given to him in his three capacities of President of Priests, Lawyers, and Physicians. I repeat it now with rancour: Beelzebub and Bouvard are synonymous terms in my lexicon. Five years ago I loved the wretch, for he saved her, as I thought, in my presence—did that give him a right over her life? Has not he cancelled my gratitude? Can one love and hate at once? I would if I could—yes, I do thank him for prolonging her life for five years—but oh! professions, professions! how *l'esprit du corps* absorbs all feelings!—and how prejudice becomes principle! Dear old woman! she is now, I fear, no more!—I can write no more, madam, for I can write on no other subject, and have no right to torment you with my concern. You shall hear no more of it. Nature takes care that hopeless griefs should not be permanent, and I have seen so much affectation of lamentation where little was felt, and I know so well that I have often felt most where I have discovered least, that I will profane

my affectation to my lost friend with no ostentation—much less to those who never knew her. I live enough in solitude to indulge all my sensations, without troubling others.

P. S.—Since I wrote my letter I have had another shock,—General Conway has broken his arm! Lady Ailesbury assures me there is as little bad as there can be in such an accident, and that I shall hear again to-morrow. Still I shall go to him on Friday.

LETTER CLXXXII.

Park Place, Oct. 10, at midnight, 1780.

I SIT down after the family here are gone to bed to answer your ladyship's letter which I received this morning as I was getting into my postchaise; and to-morrow I go to Nuneham; a visit I could not refuse as it is but sixteen miles off, and that I have not been there these two years: otherwise I am in no mood to seek or to contribute to amusement.

You did me justice, madam, in imputing my silence to my unhappiness. My dear old friend is gone! I had been told to expect it; but the contrary wind kept me twelve days in anxious misery! and I could not help having moments of hope—now they are all destroyed. Mr. Conway's accident, too, though he is in the fairest way possible, did not diminish my concern; my spirits are so naturally good that I know they will recover without efforts; yet frequent losses of

friends remind one of the discomforts of old age; but one should not attrist those who are at a distance from the precipice.

I have not heard Lady Charlotte Finch's *bon-mot*, nor anything else till last night, when I learnt Lord Cornwallis's victory from those most concerned. I passed the evening with Lady Hertford at Mrs. Keene's. Lord and Lady North were there, *en cour plénière*, with Miss, the Queen Mother Drake, Mr. Williams, and Brydone, the Sicilian traveller, who having wriggled himself into Bushy, will, I suppose, soon be an envoy, like so many other Scots. As Lord North's poppies had been just jerked with sprigs of laurel, he was very good company, and my partner at cribbage. He has just been in Somersetshire, and let a house to a woman who petitioned for a piece more of land as her tenement had no backside. I said he had certainly not sold her a *good bargain*. This suited his humour, and he told us several more good stories. I say nothing of the victory over my godson. It is all in the "Gazette," and I suppose more. 'Tis sufficient to make us relapse into our American frenzy, which the last cargo of bad news had cooled. The conqueror talks of severity to the late renegades; he forgets his own protest on the Stamp Act, or perhaps chooses to wash it out with blood.

Lady Surrey is not only confined, but for some time was tied down in her bed. She now walks about the house, but sometimes herself asks for the strait waistcoat.

The Duchess of Gloucester is certainly not going abroad to my knowledge; at least the Duke is amazingly recovered by the sea air, and looks, they tell me, remarkably well.

I believe these are answers to all your ladyship's questions, except on Lady Granard's match. I did not know it or her. The last query is very kind; Boughton and Drayton I have seen, and Kirby I should like to see, but you will be returned, and the season gone, before I could reach Farming Woods. At present I will wish you good night, Madam, after thanking you again for your kindness about my poor lost friend! her not having taken James's powder adds to my sorrow, and I cannot forget it, but I have promised to say no more on that terrible subject.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

THOSE who are curious in the history of Parliamentary "whipping" may be amused by the following Letters of MR. RIGBY to LORD OSSORY:

Pay Office, Friday, Jan. 26, 1770.

MY DEAR LORD,

I DID fully intend to have had the pleasure of seeing you at Houghton last Saturday, but the death of the new Chancellor and the necessary choice of a new Speaker found me so much employment in town, that I could not leave it. I would willingly carry my intentions of waiting upon you into execution to-morrow, but I am obliged to attend a meeting of Lord Holland's, Lord Bates', and the Duke of Bedford's friends to-morrow evening, on the subject of Dr. Musgrave's attendance in the House of Commons next Monday, when he is ordered to attend, and will be called upon to make out his accusation against all or any of those lords. This business on that day makes it seriously to be desired, that all the friends of the persons mentioned should attend, and therefore I would heartily wish you could be present.

The inclosed paper tells you what was done yesterday in the committee on the state of the nation. You see we are hard pressed on the Middlesex Election, and the opposition muster above forty more on that question than they can do on any other. That committee sits again next Wednesday, when something similar will be moved again, so that if you come up for the Monday's business, I hope you will give us your assistance likewise on the Wednesday. I trust you

will pardon my taking this liberty and believe me very sincerely, Yours, &c. RICHD. RIGBY.

I beg your Lordship to present my best compliments to Lady Ossory.

Pay Office, Feb. 1, 1770.

MY DEAR LORD,

MR. Coxe to-day told the House of Commons, that he should put off his motion to address the King to enquire who advised the removal of the late Chancellor till Monday next, which makes it impossible for me to come to you as I intended, and in some measure settled, next Sunday. If at last he should be prevailed on, by older and wiser people than himself, to drop all further thought of it, I shall be vexed that he deprives me of the pleasure of going to Houghton; but I think just at this crisis it would not be advisable for me to be out of the way.

The news of to-day are the resignations of Lord Cornwallis and Lord Howe, who have both given Lord North the strongest assurances of supporting his administration, though they desire to resign their employments. These are strange ideas, and not much to be relied upon for any long space of time, I am certain. I know nothing of the intended disposition of the vacancies, but Ellis to James Grenville's vice-treasurership, Townsend of the Admiralty to go to the Treasury; and Lord North sent to Charles Fox this morning and offered him a seat at the Admiralty Board, which he has accepted. I cannot learn whether Lord Chatham's gout will permit him to come to the House of Lords to-morrow or not. Yesterday's disappointment, for it was very great, may inflame his political great toe very possibly. I think myself as an individual very much obliged to you for giving yourself the trouble of attending, and am,

Yours, &c. RICH. RIGBY.

I desire my best compliments to Lady Ossory.

Pay Office, Wednesday evening, Feb. 7, 1770.

My dear Lord,

You overrate my correspondence very much, but, such as it is, you shall always be welcome to it. Nothing has passed this week but the abusing one another a little, and the settling the Pomfret election, in which people were so far engaged by the neutrality or indifference of the Duke of Grafton about it, that it was irrecoverable to get it out of the hands of Lord Clive and Lord North, and everybody left the House but myself and thirty-one more, who owed some resentment to his lordship for his treatment of us last year. We found 161 to a very violent measure, and abused them for it, and thus the borough is gone from Sir Rowland Wim for ever, who may thank himself for not withdrawing his petition, as I, with many others, advised him over and over again to do. I have been employed all this day, and have succeeded in getting Moreton to give up his seat at Abingdon, which election was to have come on to-morrow, and we should have had a scandalous cause to support, and might have been hard run upon it, which does not seem prudent on any new and bad ground at present. I think I told you that on Friday we should have another battle on the state of the nation; that will not be till Monday, when we make a general muster of all our forces, and I believe shall beat them by a larger majority than forty. Sir James Lowther comes out of Cumberland to support us, the Duke of Grafton being removed, and they have fetched Conolly from Ireland and Lord Edward Bentinck from Paris. Robinson has told you, I suppose, that he is to be Vice-chamberlain to the King. Ellis has kissed hands for Vice-treasurer, and black Townshend for the Treasury; the other remaining are not disposed of, nor can we spare too many out of Parliament at a time. Coxe's motion ended in fume. Pray make my compliments to Lady Ossory, and believe me, my dear lord, most faithfully and affectionately, Yours.

The Duchess of Northumberland has resigned the Bedchamber; she put the cause upon her health. Lady Holdernesse is her successor.

RICHD. RIGBY.

Pay Office, Nov. 27, 1770.

MY DEAR LORD,

I FOUND your letter upon my table last night upon my return from Bath, where the Duke of Bridgewater and I went on Friday last to see the Duke of Bedford, whom we found better than I expected, plainly mended considerably since he went there. His grace and family return to London next Sunday.

I shall certainly not grudge my trouble in sending you accounts of any events that arise, and that come to my knowledge sooner than they reach the newspapers, which is not very often the case. I have not been able to find out yet, whether peace or war is most probable, and if my friends, the Ministers, know more than they did a week ago they keep it to themselves. Cornwallis and Martyn are ordered to their governments in the Mediterranean, and Lord Howe yesterday kissed hands for the command of the fleet, so that everything ostensible is warlike.

If I hear anything about the Spanish embassy agreeable to you, I should be happy to communicate it; but, in the present state of things, that is not likely to be much thought of. I beg my compliments to Lady Ossory, and am most sincerely, my dear lord, yours,

RICHD. RIGBY.

Pay Office, Dec. 6, 1770.

My dear Lord,

I write to you more to let you see that I have not forgotten your request, than for any events I have to inform you of. Lord Chatham has gone on talking in the House of Lords till he has tired everybody and himself too, I believe; for they are to have no more business in that House of Parliament till after Christmas. Upon their divisions, the numbers have been towards threescore on one side, and twenty or one-and-twenty on the other. Lord Temple and Mr. Grenville's friends amongst the Lords have never appeared this session, and Lord Camden only yesterday, when Chatham moved the old thing of the Middlesex election, when Lord Camden declared he was *detached* from any *man* or set of men. In the House of Commons our numbers keep as high as ever. The great object of speculation remains still in suspense, and the Ministers do not say whether it is to be peace or war; but we shall vote a large augmentation to the army to-morrow, and more men-of-war are every day put into commission. It must be war, I conjecture, but I really am not in the secret, if there is one to be let into.

The Duke of Bedford is come to town considerably better than when he went to Bath. He eats and sleeps well, and has no pain: he is still very weak, but can walk round the garden at Bedford House with help. I know nothing of the gambling world, and but little of the *coterie*, where I hear the ladies were well nigh pulling caps the night before last on General Cholmondeley's being black-balled, who was protected by Lady Barrymore. I beg my compliments to Lady Ossory, and am,

Yours, &c., Richd. Rigby.

Lord Holland has sold Piccadilly House to Lord Melbourne, and it is to be called Melbourne House.

Pay Office, Tuesday, Dec. 18, 1770.

My dear Lord,

To-morrow Lord Weymouth resigns the seals, and Sandwich will be Secretary of State. He never communicated his intention of taking this step to Lord Gower, to me, or to any other person, till he desired the King's permission to lay down his office. The only reason he has given for it to me is, that he was single in opinion against all the rest of the Cabinet in two or three propositions, lately, and he could not reconcile to himself remaining in so active and responsible a situation as secretary for the southern department, under such circumstances. The King offered to contrive any arrangement to put him into any other employment, but he desires, for the present, to remain out of place, and will support with at least as much zeal and eagerness out of office as before. He asked Sandwich's post-office for Hony Thyrone, as an ostensible mark of quitting in perfect good-humour, and he will be post-master to-morrow. Bamber Gascoyne comes in for Weobly. No other changes or removes will happen in consequence of this unfortunate step. It is said many of Grenville's friends, Wedderburn and others, are in treaty with Lord North, and I believe it, but I don't know it; for I am not the negotiator this time. It is also said De Grey is soon to be Chancellor, which I think probable.

Lord George Sackville did actually yesterday fight a duel with Governor Johnston. Both the Governor and little Onslow called him coward in the House of Commons on Friday last, and yesterday he took out Johnston into Hyde-park, where they fired a brace of pistols at each other; one of Johnston's balls hit Lord George's pistol, which was all the damage done. Tommy Townshend, Lord George's second; Sir James Lowther, the other's. These two events furnish sufficient discourse for this day or two; and, as you desire a line from me sometimes, I could not help troubling you with a word to authenticate them.

I think war seems more and more inevitable.

Pray present my compliments to Lady Ossory, and believe me, my dear lord, very sincerely yours,

RICHD. RIGBY.

Pay Office, Saturday, March 14, 1772.

MY DEAR LORD,

LAST night, at twelve o'clock, the Opposition came to be within thirty-six of us, upon the question of the preamble standing part of the Bill on this cursed Marriage Act of the Royal Family. The numbers were 200 to 164. The consequence of being beat on this measure may be little short of fatal to the present Ministry, and therefore I take the liberty of sending you a line, to tell you that your support on Monday will lay a lasting obligation upon, my dear lord, your most faithful and obedient humble servant,

RICHD. RIGBY.

Pay Office, March 17, 1772.

MY DEAR LORD,

IF I had conceived the smallest notion that the reason why I had not seen you in town since this Marriage Bill has been in the House of Commons had arose from your dislike to the bill, instead of the trouble of a journey hither, I could not have prevailed upon myself to desire your attendance, which I own I did, as it was, with some difficulty. When we discoursed about it the last time I had the pleasure of seeing you, I thought you regarded it as I did, and as I do, as a measure not entirely defensible in its extent, but not likely to be very dangerous in its consequences, and to be carried into effect principally, if not wholly, on account of the quarter from whence it originated. But as the case is,

you have given me very sufficient reasons for not coming to my summons, and I must only beg your pardon for the liberty I took in sending it. We divided last night, or rather this morning, 222 to 160; so we are likely to scramble through it well enough, though not under four or five more tedious sittings. Charles Fox has made much the ablest opposition of any of them. I don't think I ever remember, since I have sat in Parliament, any man shine more upon one subject, than Charles has done in this. He continues his compliments to Lord North, and that friendship seems as if it would be more cemented than loosened by this business. Your friend Craufurd has opened upon this occasion. He was exceedingly highbred, or else did very well.

Yours, &c. RICHD. RIGBY.

The following is from Mr. Burke.

Beaconsfield, Jan. 22, 1792.

MY DEAR LORD,

I MUST cast myself on your goodness to pardon my strange silence. My mind has been much and variously agitated; and since I came to the country (which I shall leave this day) I have had but indifferent health. I am now however, at my usual par, or as near it as declining years will allow.

I send you the letter which you put into my hands. The Ministers have not spoken a single syllable to me on the business of the Catholics or any other Irish affair. I hope they have acted in such a manner as so difficult and complicated an affair as Ireland has been made, with proper prudence and circumspection. I always was for admitting the Catholics into the Constitution; but I would have the door opened, and not broken open. The thoughts, however, of those who ruled in Ireland with omnipotence equal to their obstinacy, thought it magnanimous to yield to nothing but

force. The door being broken open, it is not only the cause and party which made the forcible entry, but every other that comes in and acts as it pleases. Now, Parliamentary Reforms and an Absentee Tax make a part in the general system of complaint, as well as every other real or imaginary grievance in the kingdom; and no description of men, or parties, is without its project. To give or to refuse requires no talent; it requires only the capacity to say aye or no. But it is another thing to form a rational and political plan upon the subject, without which concession produces contempt, and refusal produces rage and indignation. I have not heard of a plan here; and I am sure not one man in the Irish Government has capacity for it, or has even thought of such a thing. Now many things are brought on at once, and a general confusion has taken place.

Pardon me the liberty I take. I am convinced that your lordship ought to come to town and see as many people of Irish property as you can get together, in order to consult on matters which concern you all not a little, as men of weight in the country, and in this, attention, vigilance, and decision, have never been at any time more necessary. I once more beg pardon for my strange neglect, which was after all not so much neglect in reality as in appearance. Surely no man respects, and indeed few I believe love you more than I do. Believe me, with most sincere attachment, yours, &c.,

Ed. Burke.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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